

Oswald Garrison Villard on Judge Parker

The Nation

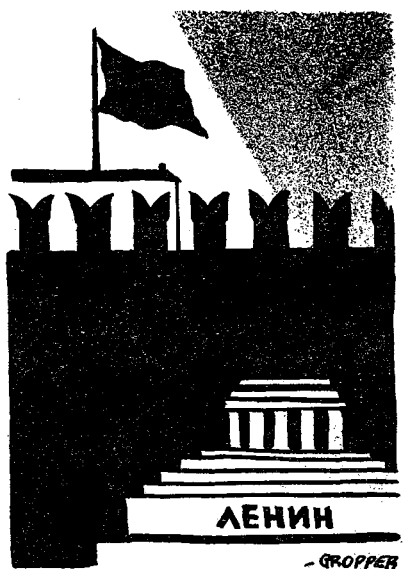
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Wednesday, April 30, 1930

Small-Town Prohibition

by William W. Norton



The Latest Bolshevik Zigzag

by Louis Fischer

“The Sweet Cheat Gone” by Marcel Proust

reviewed by Joseph Wood Krutch

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Vol. CXXX

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OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD, EDITOR
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THE GUILT for the horrible loss of life in the Columbus penitentiary fire rests squarely upon the State of Ohio. Here is a penitentiary just a century old, built to contain 1,500 persons and actually crowded with 4,900. It had already been the scene of one fire with terrible loss of life, yet nothing was done to remedy conditions. The 1929 handbook of the National Society of Penal Information declared that the overcrowding was worse than in any other large prison and that less than most other penitentiaries had it grown away from the old ideas of penology. In other words, this prison has for years been a disgrace to the rich and prosperous State of Ohio, which is now reaping just what it has sown. It cannot escape universal condemnation by persons who have a spark of humanity and decency within them, who believe that no American State should be allowed to outdo its criminals in its criminal mishandling of those it is supposed to redeem and cure. We do not know or care who or what started the fire. Whether it was incendiary or not, the black guilt of this mass murder rests on the State which has tolerated so horrible an institution.

WE ARE GLAD the Conference Committee on the tariff bill has run the rates up all along the line, agreeing invariably on the highest duties. We hope that this measure will emerge just as bad as it possibly can be, for the worse it is the quicker will come the punishment and

the reaction. Never, we believe, was there a spectacle of national economic folly similar to this of putting up tariff walls to a greater height than ever before in a period of business depression—the very moment when everything should be done to stimulate foreign trade. Meanwhile France has retaliated with a new high tariff on imported automobiles, trucks, and parts, passed in the Chamber of Deputies by 472 to 2, thus putting tariff burdens of about \$1,000,000 a year on the American companies which are trying to sell their cars in France, the minimum duty on tourist cars being 45 per cent ad valorem. On April 16 the Cuban Minister to the United States, Dr. Orestes Ferrara, declared before the Southwest Foreign Trade Conference that the relations of his country to ours were "too sinister" to discuss before "so optimistic a gathering." But he felt obliged to point out that because of the new tariff "our sugar crisis is ruining our interests and at the same time yours, also." Once large and prosperous American companies in Cuba, he declared, "are going into the hands of receivers," and "have seen their investments reduced from \$1,500,000,000 to less than \$700,000,000." It is refreshing to note that one Democrat, ex-Senator James A. Reed, has told the truth about this bill. After rudely referring to President Hoover as a "misplaced cipher" he declared that the new tariff "perpetuates gross robberies for the benefit of a favored few."

IN FACE OF THE FACT that Senator Hiram Bingham was censured by his associates of the Senate for reprehensible conduct in deceiving the Senate Committee on Finance by sneaking a lobbyist of the Connecticut Manufacturers' Association into the committee's sessions as his private secretary, the President of the United States has chosen Mr. Bingham to head a commission to survey the situation in Samoa this summer. In face of the fact that his national Republican chairman, Claudius F. Huston, has been proved to have used for speculation for his private profit funds sent to him in trust to be used for lobbying purposes, Mr. Hoover permits him to remain as chairman. The President is either without the courage to oust him or without sufficient moral sensitiveness to be moved by the revelations of Mr. Huston's misconduct. What is the public to think of its Chief Executive in the light of these two happenings? Is it surprising that his stock steadily sinks? The rejection of his nominee for the Supreme Court, Judge Parker, by the Judiciary Committee of the Senate by a vote of 10 to 6 will still further diminish his prestige. The President might, it would seem, have looked up Judge Parker's record sufficiently to have ascertained all the details of his career both as a politician and as a judge before sending in his name.

MORE DELAY AT MUSCLE SHOALS! The House Committee on Military Affairs has discarded the Norris resolution for government operation of the Muscle Shoals plant, which passed the Senate by a vote of 45 to 23, and has selected a subcommittee of five to draft a bill for private operation under lease with an alternative plan for public operation if no satisfactory bid is forthcoming.

ing. If the Norris bill could be brought before the House that body would probably pass it; for the lobby revelations have made it politically dangerous to support the power companies. If a leasing bill can be reported, on the other hand, the extensive Southern interests that properly desire industrial development may be brought to support it as offering the only promise of action. With the Senate committed to public operation, however, such action by the House would only bring another deadlock and further delay in the utilization of this great plant. Apparently the power trust plans, if necessary, to continue the delay indefinitely in the hope that Senator Norris may be tired out or worn out in his magnificent fight for the public interest.

THE CHOICE OF ROLAND W. BOYDEN as a member of the Permanent Court of International Arbitration at The Hague is one of Mr. Hoover's appointments that can be commended. Mr. Boyden has had a useful and creditable experience in diplomatic or quasi-diplomatic business. He was a member of the American delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, and later, for some four years, served with dignity and general acceptance as the unofficial representative of the United States on the Reparations Commission. A few months ago he was designated by Mr. Hoover as umpire of the German-American Mixed Claims Commission. One of the early duties of the four American members of The Hague tribunal will be to nominate a successor to Chief Justice Hughes in the World Court of the League of Nations. The importance of this choice may be considerable if the United States decides to adhere to the court under the modifications of the court statute which have been made for its benefit. It is to be hoped, however, that the choice may not fall upon Professor John H. Wigmore, of Northwestern University, who has been strongly urged for the position. Professor Wigmore has high standing as a legal writer, but his attitude toward pacifists and radicals during the time, 1916-1920, when he was attached to the Judge Advocate General's office was so openly hostile as to unfit him for judicial honor.

UNCLE JOE GRUNDY'S campaign for election as Senator for Pennsylvania goes merrily forward, supported by a weird aggregation of wets, drys, labor leaders, and Mellons. The Mellon indorsement, announced by W. L. Mellon of Pittsburgh, spokesman for the family interests, declares that Pennsylvania needs a man of Grundy's "character, exceptional ability, unquestioned courage, and long experience," praises him to the skies for the way in which he "fearlessly" jammed through the tariff bill, and becomes positively eloquent in its defense of protection as the key to all of Pennsylvania's prosperity. Unfortunately, the day before the Mellon paean was issued the campaign committee that is supporting Secretary of Labor Davis came out with the charge that Grundy was planning to buy his nomination at the primaries, but such an allegation in the chemically pure political atmosphere of Pennsylvania is, of course, beneath contempt. A third Republican candidate, Professor Francis H. Bohlen, regarded as friendly to labor, is running on a wet platform. Even to Pennsylvanians the situation looks confused, but to the fearless Grundy the course is as straight as a string. The tariff bill, he told a crowd the other day in the face of all the other candidates, is "not what it ought

to be"; the duties must be further revised—upward. This in Pennsylvania is known as statesmanship.

WHEN HENRY H. CURRAN, bearing the name of a lieutenant-colonel who gave his life for his country at Chancellorsville, appeared before the Senate Lobby Inquiry Committee, he charged that the Eighteenth Amendment had made the government "a murderer and an invader of the peoples' rights." When asked if he would favor a resort to arms if necessary, Mr. Curran, having previously declared that the "rights of mankind" as defined in the Constitution and Bill of Rights should be "defended in every way that may become necessary," sidestepped the question by saying: "We will cross that bridge when we come to it." Had any Socialist or red taken this position the welkin would have rung with demands that he be jailed for threatening to upset our government by force. In addition Mr. Curran testified that the great popular revolt against the Constitution, which his Association Against the Prohibition Amendment leads, was chiefly financed by seven multimillionaires, five of whom gave \$5,000 a year each for Mr. Curran's own salary of \$25,000 a year. Of these seven men five were Irénée du Pont, Pierre S. du Pont, Lamont du Pont, John J. Raskob, and Charles H. Sabin. Mr. Curran's society took in \$427,213 in 1929 and is asking for \$1,000,000 this year to elect a wet Congress. As a whole Mr. Curran's showing was anything but edifying, even to the wets who listened to his two days' grilling. Neither side shines in the hearings.

THE UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION continues acute. The Federal Council of Churches has urged the churches to give special attention to the problem on April 27. The National Unemployment League, seconding the suggestion of an Unemployment Sunday, urges that collections be taken on that day for relief purposes and that an appeal be made for a huge public-works program to relieve the existing distress. In the important matter of plans for the actual prevention of unemployment the federal government has allowed the leadership to pass to New York State, whose Committee on the Stabilization of Industry for the Prevention of Unemployment recently appointed by Governor Roosevelt has already submitted an interesting preliminary report. Calling attention to the striking results attained by some progressive employers, the committee says: "When employers become convinced of its value the habit of stabilizing will be included in their business practice just as naturally and completely as the habit of filing. . . . The 'slump bugaboo' is not necessarily an act of Divine Providence. It is a problem to be faced and worked out, like any other business problem." This is looking in the right direction, but if we are to get anywhere we shall have to travel a long way. An intelligently planned system of unemployment insurance, which as yet has scarcely begun to be discussed, could be made an effective agency to convince backward employers of the value of stabilization, for it could be arranged so that they would save money by steady operation.

THE RECORD OF THE DAUGHTERS of the American Revolution, whose annual congress has just been held in Washington, remains unsullied. On Monday the Daughters heard President Hoover advocate the en-

trance of the United States into the World Court. On Wednesday the Daughters resolved against "involvement in European affairs" and in favor of "adequate" national, particularly naval, defense. On the same day resolutions were passed advocating registration of aliens, investigation of subversive organizations, and deportation of subversive aliens. But on Friday when one brave Daughter tried to line up her sisters in favor of the Eighteenth Amendment she was immediately suppressed by a resolution pledging the society to avoid controversial or dividing subjects such as religion, politics, and prohibition. On the same day Mrs. William T. Brown and Mrs. Carroll Miller, prominent members of the D. A. R., resigned because of the society's attitude toward the World Court and naval disarmament. On Saturday Mrs. Lowell Fletcher Hobart, President General, cried "Pacifist!" at the two resigners while the society reaffirmed its position by adopting another sheaf of resolutions calling for adequate naval and military defense and opposing the limitation plans of the London conference. Once more the Daughters have convened and adjourned. Once more, we are glad to say, they have upheld with characteristic courage the inalienable American right of resolution. But their ranks are thinning. Miss Margaretta Fort, daughter of the late Governor of New Jersey, and Mrs. Lois Kimball Rosenberry, wife of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin, are the latest to announce their resignations.

UNION SQUARE in New York City on May Day is not big enough to hold a meeting, accompanied by patriotic flourishes, of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and a meeting, accompanied by communistic and severely non-patriotic flourishes, of the Workers' Party. Police Commissioner Whalen has issued to the representatives of the Communists a permit for a demonstration to take place on May Day one hour after the Veterans of Foreign Wars are scheduled to end their program. If this is not looking for trouble we do not know what is. The workers have claimed Union Square as their own for nearly half a century; it was formerly in the heart of the organized clothing-workers district and in it, times without number, speeches for the laboring man have been made which would have drawn listeners in no other part of the city. Now in this square of territory, New York's Hyde Park if it has any, we are to see two groups, almost at the same time, which are bitterly antagonistic to each other. On March 7 Richard J. Kennedy, Junior Vice-Commander of the V. F. W., declared a propos of the May Day parade: "The Commander will issue orders to let the police and the National Guard units take care of any rioting. . . . But no one need worry that the veterans won't be ready for any trouble and fully able to protect themselves. They will wear their tin hats and will have fixed bayonets on their rifles." In view of this sort of language, in view of the fact that May 1 is the traditional workers' holiday all over the world, Mr. Whalen and Mayor Walker take upon themselves the gravest responsibility in permitting these two groups to meet on the same ground. The sentencing of Robert Minor and William Z. Foster and their companions arrested on March 6 to from one day to three years in the penitentiary will not help matters. Unless Mr. Whalen can be persuaded to change these plans we look forward to the occasion with grave apprehension.

VLADIMIR MAIAKOVSKY, the "proletarian" poet, committed suicide by shooting himself in the heart in Moscow on April 14. One hundred thousand people are said to have passed his bier in a single day, but his suicide, which occurred after his return from a late party and is reported to have been for love, is likely to be the occasion of some scandal. Communists are supposed to be above romantic follies of this sort, and the case is particularly striking in view of the fact that the dead man composed a bitterly satiric poem upon another Soviet poet, Serge Essenin, who went to a similar death for a similar reason. Scoffers will doubtless find in the event a proof of their contention that even the most enthusiastic Communists end by finding communistic life unendurable, but the suicide probably proves only that certain traditional Russian gestures are not likely to be forgotten immediately even by the most ardent of a new generation. Maiakovsky once accompanied Trotzky on a speaking tour and had formerly been regarded as the leading poet of communism, though his last two plays are said to have been failures and, what is worse, to have come under the suspicion of being doctrinally unsound. In spite of his suicide, he is to be given a civic funeral.

BOOKS AND LETTERS have sustained a great loss in the death of Charles Scribner, head of Charles Scribner's Sons ever since 1879. A man of the best of taste, and of standards he was never willing to lower, he brought to the publishing business the love of a master-craftsman. His books were to be books, but they were also to be creations of which he and his firm could be proud. So he lent distinction to his volumes, to his magazine, even to his admirable bookstore. Mr. Scribner was far more than just their publisher to his authors. His friendships were deep and varied, especially overseas. To American audiences he helped to introduce Kipling, Barrie, Galsworthy, Meredith, and Stevenson. Between himself and most of these as well as many American writers there were strong personal ties. It was a great achievement to conduct a fine house, to keep it intact and strong during so long a period, and to leave it receptive to new ideas. He was able to look back on his career with complete satisfaction and the knowledge of a life honestly, earnestly, and richly lived.

TO DANIEL CHESTER FRENCH at eighty our respectful homage. It is a long, long way from the Minute Man of Concord, his first great achievement, to his recently completed Flanders Fields; but it is a journey marked all the way by high standards, absolute devotion to his art, and the modesty characteristic of the noblest artists. There will be differences of opinion as to which is his greatest work; to us it is the deeply pondering Lincoln at Washington in Henry Bacon's marvelous setting, with the children of the capital sailing their toy boats under the Emancipator's eyes. Who can behold that and remain unmoved? His best-known work, Death Staying the Hand of the Sculptor, designed as a monument for the tomb of the sculptor Martin Milmore at Boston, is universal in its appeal. Recently Mr. French was asked to speak of American art as it is. He refused. It was in transformation, he said—in process of crystallization. Who could say where it was heading? So is art reflecting our politics. We are on our way—whither no man knoweth.

The Crumbs of London

THAT the outcome of the London Disarmament Conference is a bitter, almost a crushing, disappointment we cannot deny. That it closely approximates failure will, we believe, be the verdict of all clear-thinking persons. We had hoped for half a loaf; then for a slice. We have obtained only a few crumbs. We are well aware that President Hoover has hailed it as a great achievement. His assurance to the D. A. R. convention that "the conference has been able to bring about an actual reduction in the armaments of the three nations to about 25 per cent less than the standard discussed during the conference which was held at Geneva three years ago, and a reduction of about 12 per cent below present naval programs as rapidly as the present ships become obsolete" has not in the least convinced or impressed us. Why should anybody throw up his hat because of a reduction of 25 per cent below standards proposed *in vain* three years ago, or because of a reduction of 12 per cent from the present program as soon as some of the existing ships, unnamed, become obsolete? If this is all that can be said of the outcome at London it is little indeed. One recalls the drunkard who, on being reproved for his inebriation, sought to defend himself by saying how much drunker he would have been had he indulged in a lot more whiskey and soda. As a matter of fact, this is the usual face-saving of the politician determined to make the best of a bad situation. Mr. Hoover's first year in the White House has ended with almost nothing constructive or worth while to show. He is soon to sign or to veto the worst tariff bill in history. He would be less than human if he did not endeavor to make London appear a great triumph.

It is self-evident that his paean of satisfaction will not bear analysis. For example, he was very careful in his address of April 14 to say nothing of the fact that if we are to build up to the parity conceded to us at London we shall have to construct new ships to cost no less than \$1,000,000,000. Is it Mr. Hoover's plan to recommend this? A disarmament conference which wound up with appropriations of \$1,000,000,000 would be such a scandal, such a mockery, that we cannot think that even Mr. Hoover would dare to acclaim it as a long step toward peace. If Congress moves in that direction we shall consider the conference not only a failure but a dreadful disaster. Certainly no one can deny that the effects of such an additional building program would far offset the few concrete achievements, such as extending the battleship holiday until December 31, 1936, destroying two more antiquated battleships, the *Utah* and the *Florida*, and certain limitations of destroyers and submarines. Even this slight achievement is gravely weakened by a clause which provides that "any Power which deems its national security impaired by the new construction of an outside Power may upon due notice to the two other Powers increase its figures with a provision for a proportionate increase in their figures in the same category or categories."

How much really remains? The most substantial achievement of the Washington conference of 1922 was a psychological one—the ending of all talk of a possible war between the United States and Japan. From the day of the

acceptance of the 5-5-3 standard the menace of an armed conflict with Japan came to an end in the press of the United States, with an occasional exception to prove the rule. No longer did the Sunday newspapers present their sensational articles as to the imminence of hostilities; no longer was it possible for some of those who betrayed the United States in the oil scandals to allege that the turning over of valuable government resources to private individuals was necessitated by the imminent coming of war between the United States and Japan. If the London conference should have a similar psychological result in putting an end to the constant talk of war between ourselves and the mother country, it would be an achievement well worth the cost. That Mr. Hoover thinks this will be the result is demonstrated by the following passage from his speech of April 14: "But, most important of all, it [the conference] has been able finally to turn the tide of constantly increasing naval arms and to end the poison of suspicion and ill-will generated by constant rivalry in construction."

One danger to our mind is that the conference, while cutting off a few ships and extending the battleship holiday until 1936, has not done anything to decrease or really to chasten the personnel of the various fleets. There lies the real menace—the constant discussion by naval men of the next war, and their increasing effort to alarm somebody as to the invariably inadequate war preparations of their governments. That they are little to be blamed for this is obvious. They must have an objective to keep up the fighting spirit. They are paid to plan and drill for the next war and therefore they must have a possible enemy. If England should disappear under the ocean tomorrow the navy men would at once find it necessary to build a fleet competent to handle the navies of France and Italy combined. If these fleets were to disappear there would still be Japan and Russia to give cause to the fear that leads to more appropriations for more guns and more ships. Whether we may actually look for any real demobilization of the spirit which engenders the naval rivalries that provoke wars remains to be seen. But if something has been achieved along that line, we repeat it will have been worth while and Mr. Hoover will be entitled to all the credit thereof—even if that leaves us far from those high hopes we all cherished after Ramsay MacDonald's visit to this country.

What should be the attitude of liberals and peace lovers toward the new treaty? There is nothing to be gained by an effort to defeat the convention which the delegates will bring back to this country. But it must be ratified with a clear understanding that the lovers of peace think it but a tiny step forward, and even that only if there is no effort to build up to parity. Peace workers should serve notice now that they will fight as never before against any further effort to construct more ships, to squander more funds, to keep up that hideous waste which Mr. Hoover himself has said makes our expenditures on army and navy greater than those of any other country in the world. Against the continuance of this abomination the conscience of America must set itself without the possibility of concession or compromise.

Merger on Merger

THE announcement of a reorganization whereby the General Electric Company and the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company will own 51.3 per cent of the voting power of the Radio Corporation of America calls attention once more to the process of unification and threatened monopoly in the radio field. If the plan is ratified by the stockholders at their meeting on May 6, the Radio Corporation, in return for 6,580,375 shares of stock valued at some \$390,000,000, will acquire exclusive licenses under General Electric and Westinghouse patents to manufacture radio apparatus, together with their radio-manufacturing facilities and the stocks that they own in Radio Corporation subsidiaries, giving that concern exclusive ownership of the National Broadcasting Company, the R.C.A. Victor Company, the R.C.A. Radiotron Company, and R.C.A. Photophone. In addition to these companies, R.C.A. Communications, and the Radio-Marine Corporation, the Radio Corporation is also heavily interested in the amusement industry through the Radio Keith Orpheum Corporation, and in various other undertakings. A mere list of the interests owned by this giant, formed by the General Electric Company less than eleven years ago, is bewildering.

The activities of the Radio Corporation in its effort to get a monopoly of the air were the subject of much unfavorable testimony, it will be recalled, before the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce last winter, and Senator Dill is now quick to call attention to what he declares to be Owen D. Young's plans for "a world-wide radio trust." The General Electric, he asserts, "is to be not only the parent company of the power trust and of the electrical manufacturing business but the parent company of the radio business with all its ramifications." Noting Mr. Young's part in founding the International Bank and adverting to the Radio Corporation's exclusive contracts with every great government except Russia, he demands that the Department of Justice determine "whether or not under our law today they have the right to form an organization leading to world-wide monopoly of radio development." It is a great question, which affects not only the business life of competing radio manufacturers, but, as Senator Dill points out, the very development of public opinion itself.

The movement toward integration and unified control, with all the accompanying dangers of private monopoly, is by no means confined to the radio industry, however, nor is it limited to our own country. An interesting article in a recent issue of the *Japan Chronicle* calls attention to exactly the same phenomenon on the other side of the world:

The Big Five include Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Yasuda, Sumitomo, and Okura, and they operate in such a variety of forms that one never knows for certain that one is not dealing with them. Mitsui's have banking, insurance, and "trust," merchandising, textile mills and materials, fishing and other food industries, machine-making, mining, smelting, and metal refining, chemical industries, shipping and land transport, light and power, buildings and warehouses—in fact, it is difficult to say what Mitsui does not do.

The last-named company alone, with a capital above \$600,000,000, though it devotes less than 12 per cent of that

capital to trade, yet carries on more than one-fifth of all Japan's foreign commerce. The *Chronicle* writer does not believe that these great concerns are genuinely enterprising, or that they promote the larger interests of Japan; yet he rather gloomily forecasts their further development and increased control over government. Similar facts are reported from all over the world. The great German shipping merger is fresh in mind, and the operations of the steel cartel have already passed national boundaries.

One important and sobering conclusion emerges from a consideration of facts like these. While all honest men must sympathize with intelligent governmental efforts to prevent unfair competition and thus to keep the way open as far as possible for the small concern, the problem of the future deals with the great company, probably to an increasing degree with the monopolistic company. We have not yet devised any satisfactory machinery for its control in the interest of all the people where that interest clashes with the profit of shareholders. Our present confidence in the omniscience and benevolence of big business is only a passing phase of public feeling. The statesmanship of the future must help private industry to organize itself for the efficient performance of genuine public service if the great private company is to survive.

Defense of Freedom

ON April 5 Judge Canaga of the Ohio Court of Common Pleas sentenced two young women under the new Ohio syndicalism law to terms of from one to five and from five to ten years, respectively, according to an Associated Press dispatch, for distributing "anti-government literature at a Martin's Ferry (radical) demonstration last fall." The one who received the longer sentence "told the court she had not advocated use of force." Last fall five girl rusticators were sentenced in California by Judge Allison (one for from six months to ten years, four for from six months to five years) for raising in front of their camping ground a flag bearing the insignia of Soviet Russia. Since the Russian program entails the overthrow of capitalist society our safety, it appears, demands that these young conspirators be put out of the way.

More recently Judge Young of the Juvenile Court in New York sent a small boy back to the Jewish protectory, whence he had been released on parole, for playing hooky from school to attend an unemployment demonstration. As a result, this latter-day Huckleberry Finn may conceivably be detained in the protectory until he is twenty-one years old. Meantime, someone in New Jersey has unearthed a sedition law, passed in 1902 after President McKinley's assassination, as a means of jailing speakers of the left-wing labor movement. These are examples of the method of dealing with dissident opinions in our lower courts.

What can be done about it? How untwist the curious kink in the thinking of a man who hopes that harsh and unjust punishment applied to a discontented minority will reduce that minority, first to silence, and at length to non-existence? We have one suggestion. Let him lock himself in his study and read a little book called "A History of Freedom of Thought," by a great historian, J. B. Bury,

Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge University.

Professor Bury says: "A long time was needed to arrive at the conclusion that the coercion of opinion was a mistake, and only a part of the world is as yet convinced. That conclusion, so far as I can judge, is the most important ever reached by men." Professor Bury does not defend free thought and speech because they are rights. "The truth is that no valid argument can be founded on the conception of natural rights, because it involves an untenable theory of the relation between society and its members." The government, he argues, may well contend that it should prohibit the circulation of pernicious opinions. It can point out, with little fear of contradiction, that a man can do as much harm by propagating anti-social doctrines as by stealing his neighbor's horse.

Theoretically, then, he maintains, the government may stand on firm ground in suppressing free speech; morally, also, it may seem right. But *practically* it is wrong. For during the entire period through which Bury traces the long and painful struggle of the human spirit against suppression, from the Greek and Roman republics to the England of Darwin, Huxley, and Arnold, the effort to suppress, whatever its logical and moral basis, has been a complete and ghastly failure. For it has not suppressed. On the contrary, it has given strength, vitality, and currency to every doctrine, either good or bad, to which it has been applied. But if our judges should read Bury's book they would discover that the effort to make people keep still leads paradoxically to a complementary effort to make them speak. Not satisfied with forcing the objector to disavow his own beliefs, intolerance insists that in order to escape punishment he shall proclaim the beliefs of his accusers.

Here in America we may already watch the advance of this inevitable extension of the principle of suppression. A judge denies naturalization to a college professor of good standing, not on the ground that he voices opposition to our government or our Constitution, since the contrary is true; but because, suspected of pacifism, he refuses to proclaim in advance that in case of war he will bear arms. The same principle is present in the so-called "yellow-dog" contract now at issue in the case of Judge Parker. This form of contract rejects the man applying for work unless, going beyond neutrality on the question of unionism, he affirmatively declares against it as a condition of his employment. Out of the drive against free expression of opinion, comes the drive for forced expression of opinion. And with that drive, just as in war or in the days of the Inquisition, the minority, in order to be safe, comfortable, or self-sustaining, must go about forever pinning someone else's opinion to its sleeve.

America has a noble tradition of liberty—free thought, free speech, the right of assembly, the right of minorities to be heard. It was built up by wise, farseeing, courageous men—Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and the rest. This tradition we have accepted as a supreme condition of social progress. It goes beyond the sphere of momentary expediency. There is no reason why we cannot keep this tradition alive. History, common sense, common decency, are on its side. No doubt there are difficulties in preserving it. They are certainly no greater than those encountered when it was built.

A Plague of Locusts

THE news from Egypt has a strange Biblical sound. A plague of locusts has infested the land. But this time the Egyptians are not helpless. They do not look upon the plague as a punishment for their sins—unless it be the sin of having failed to exterminate the enemy. They are making open war, and the dispatches are as dramatic as any that ever came from the western front. There is no quarter asked or given, no means of warfare, however horrible or unscrupulous, that remains unemployed. A cable in the *New York Times* from Cairo reports that the heaviest fighting has occurred around El Arish. The Egyptian operations are being directed by the inspector general of the Egyptian army, with the help of an entomologist. Trenches a mile long were dug across the locusts' line of advance. As the locusts fell into these they were destroyed as fast as possible, but fresh arrivals immediately took their places. On April 11 a dense mass of locusts, estimated to have been seven miles long, emerged from Wadi. They rapidly filled the original trenches and others hurriedly dug. Paraffin was poured in and ignited. The charred remains of the locusts were flung out to make ready for the next advance. Flame guns decimated their ranks. At the end of the battle an area about two miles square was black with dead locusts, in some places four inches deep.

Thus Egypt has checked an invasion that might have done incalculable harm, but the danger is not yet completely past, for an army of locusts has been reported in Palestine. It must be kept in mind that so far all news of the war has come from only one side. Perhaps the locusts do not mind. They need not worry about propaganda as long as they may fall back on propagation. And their prospects are surely not hopeless. They are invading Egypt again after 3,000 years—so far as we can learn, as great in numbers as ever—and they may still be invading Egypt 3,000 years from now.

While the Greek cities fought each other, the Macedonians came down and conquered them. While the nations of mankind are either warring with each other or arming for that purpose, our most sinister enemies, the insects and the microbes, continue their relentless depredations. Man has reached his present power on the earth chiefly through the use of one weapon, his brain. The insects and microbes have reached their enormous numbers on the earth by the use of another weapon—their appalling powers of reproduction. It has still to be shown whether, in the remorseless competitive struggle for survival, man's weapon will prove more effective than that of his minute enemies. The locust horde, for one thing, needs no navy. A considerable number of them reached England in 1869, and it is believed that they were part of a swarm that came from the west coast of Africa. Other locust swarms have been seen at sea, 1,200 miles from land; one swarm that crossed the Red Sea in 1889 was estimated to be about 2,000 square miles in extent. Here is a war to which the D. A. R., the American Legion, and other organizations straining for exercise of their bellicose instincts may profitably devote their excessive energies. Here is one enemy against whom not even the most confirmed pacifist would wish to disarm.

It Seems to Heywood Broun

CAMPAIGNS for the purity of the King's English or for better national enunciation leave me a shade coolish. I am against the "whomers," the "should and woulders," and all the "me and I" clan. If any man or woman corrects your pronunciation of a word in a public place I think you have the right to punch him in the nose. No good American jury would convict you.

Of course, the people who take it on themselves to keep the other fellow's English pure and accurate advance highfalutin excuses for their activity. They adopt an "it hurts me more" attitude. One might believe that but for their bustling the world would go to pot and all of us live in pent-houses on Babel. It is not the love of interference which moves them, so they say, but only a devotion to the mother-tongue.

Yet upon their own assertions I would indict them down to the last blue-stockinged heel. Take the classic Cyril, who first piped up, "Whom are you?" Mr. Ade, his creator, explained that the lad had been to night school. I hold that most of the gross mistakes of grammar arise less from sheer ignorance than from a little knowledge—coupled, of course, with much fright. It is the urge for elegance which leads us into error. For a month I have kept careful but silent count and I find that "me" is almost never put in the wrong place. I am not scoring such over-technical errors as "It's me," for that, I hold, is entirely permissible. Generally speaking there is a widespread popular belief that "me" is always essentially plebeian and vulgar. Mistakes arise in seeking to show off with "I" and place it in spots where it by no means has the right to go. "It was so good of you to take Mae and I to supper," says the beautiful blonde from Mr. Ziegfeld's show. I hasten to add that the beautiful blonde is entirely fictional. She exists, of course, but the author of this essay is not the "you" of the sentence. And she may add, "Between you and I, she's a good kid and I would hate to see her go out with anybody who wasn't a perfect gentleman."

Gladwys, you see, was frightened as a child by a grammar lesson. She didn't quite get the idea. It is her notion, and the notion of all the insufficiently educated, that there is something fundamentally coarse and crude about "me." It is not a lady's pronoun. And so Gladwys always strings along with "I" when there is any doubt and even if there isn't. She is not likely to be improved much by chance correctionists. They will only succeed in confusing her a little more. As things stand, Gladwys has at least a system. If they continue to pester the poor girl they will merely succeed in frightening every "I" out of her vocabulary.

If it were possible for each and every one of us to be a precisionist and to carry his education like a gentleman I might be in favor of movements for speech reform. Still, even such a state of society is open to certain criticisms. This would not be the best of all possible worlds if every man from porter to president exchanged the morning's greetings in a finished Harvard accent. I suspect that life would be easier and more natural if nobody ever undertook to hold his fellows up to grammatical and linguistic perfection. In fact,

if no more eyebrows were ever arched we might all speak with far more forthright vigor. The natural man will find his way more readily to eloquent and truthful expression than the one who lives in constant terror of the lash of ridicule. All this is said by a man who feels that his own address is Halfway House. "Me" and "I" are managed moderately well by this particular hack. This is not said with any swagger. He ought to know something about "me" and "I" since in his function of columnist he uses both so frequently.

But as for "shall" and "will" I must admit terrific terror. The rules they taught in school have flown entirely. I try to pick the proper one by ear alone, but I am almost tone deaf. Time was when clients who pointed out mistakes could wound me. Now a happy callousness has been established. In a world in which not more than 5 per cent of my associates know all the subtleties of the words denoting futurity why should any commoner be abashed to stand with the majority? And if one meets this particular problem in his stride and does not tighten up one has, at the very worst, at least an even chance of picking the right word by sheer accident in any specific instance.

Some of the most fascinating talkers I know are men and women with scarcely a shred of grammar. Surely it is more important to talk in a wise and interesting manner than to speak correctly. "Why not do both?" you suggest. It can be done, but there are barriers. Too great a preoccupation with form is apt to war against the substance. I have known disciples of better speech who never failed to let each vowel sound come trippingly from the very tip of the tongue, and they afforded me neither pleasure nor profit.

People with this particular phobia are so intent upon forming each letter correctly that words are wholly a secondary consideration and sentences must shift for themselves. Once every week upon the radio there is, or used to be, a lady who appealed to all the tots within the sound of her voice to articulate until it hurt and never slur a syllable or put an "r" on after an "aw." As one who has never been able to break himself of saying "I sawrit" (i.e., I saw it), my opinion may be thrown out as malicious and incompetent. This is, no doubt, a vile linguistic fault. And yet I shudder to think of little children all hobbled and brightly burnished in their innocent prattle.

If it were within my power to wipe out the individual eccentricities of every local dialect I would not do it. The dulcet tones of the man from Georgia often annoy me, but I love to hear the lady from the same locality talk Southern. There is an Indiana dialect not altogether beautiful and yet it serves to lend variety to any drawing-room. In the election which gave us Herbert Hoover a number of voters cast their ballots against Smith because he used the "oi" in "bird," as is our native custom. To me the Governor was never more effective and never more palpably sincere than when he grew excited and talked pure Oliver Street. I even suspect that by now there are many who regret their choice and would rather have taken the New York liberal, "raddio" and all.

HEYWOOD BROUN

Prohibition in Littletown

By WILLIAM W. NORTON

LITTLETOWN—that is an assumed name—is one of the northeastern townships of New York State. It lies close to the foothills of a prominent and popular mountain section and boasts a population of some 1,200 souls. The township came into being during the last decade of the eighteenth century and rapidly became a typical settlement of Easterners. A small potash factory, a tannery, and several small mills are largely responsible for the present existence of the three hamlets, North, South, and East Littletown, each of which was once known for its cider mill, its saloon, and its hotel. Protestantism is regnant in Littletown but applied Christianity hardly exists. When Klan agitation enveloped the township a few years ago all Roman Catholic school teachers were disposed of in the name of the Great Jehovah. Like Zenith, Middletown, and the rest, Littletown is distinctly a type town. All social activities are confined to the Masonic Lodge, the Eastern Star, the Grange, the Ladies' Aid Societies of the churches, some very minor clubs, and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. The township is Republican and dry, a unit in a county hopelessly controlled by an arid G. O. P. organization. Republicans outnumber Democrats by about ten to one and almost everybody is squarely behind the noble experiment.

Let us now examine the transformation wrought in this dry, all-American, Republican, eighteenth-century settlement by the Eighteenth Amendment. As far back as January, 1920, it was discovered that the legal fermentation of fruit juices provided a real measure of practical farm relief. During the first year of the big drought the manufacture of hard cider and elderberry, rhubarb, and dandelion wines increased by leaps and bounds; many a dirt farmer, whose former indulgence was limited to a glass or two of cool lager on rather infrequent market trips to near-by towns, now takes the precaution to stock his cellar with beverages that grow in strength as winter comes.

The first six years of the dry spell produced two stills, both operated by small farmers who have paid off their mortgages and now confine their efforts to home production and home consumption of various home brews. The art of making home brew is now so generally understood that stocks of bottles, caps, cappers, hops, and malts are regularly carried in some of the local stores. Of late, many of the newer concoctions made from imported fruits have become popular, making Littletown, considering its size, a very good market for lemons, oranges, and grapefruit. Each local artist in alcoholics assumes that his next-door neighbor is ignorant of both his thirst and his own particular method of slaking it; and the W. C. T. U., the victory won, continues to hold its regular meetings and white-ribbon teas as faithfully and with the same gullibility as a generation ago.

Littletown, of course, has its improvident sots, but none of them ever die from thirst. Many of them manage to hire out to the dry-voting, wet-drinking farmers and thereby eke out a more or less cheerful existence from the sparkling beakers of sassafrased hard cider brought up from cold farm cellars. Others who crave the strongest, and are willing to

part with a large portion of their wages, know when and where to purchase poor-grade alcohol flavored with juniper at four dollars per quart, and the transaction is completed within the township. There was a time when pure grain alcohol could be purchased from one of the choir singers in town, but to obtain this favor one had to have the proper social, fraternal, or family connections. It was a service extended only to those mute residents who had the good fortune to have been born in local purple. A very favored few still continue to get this splendid service. Even some of the local merchants gladly, and with due knowledge, supply the needs of transient bums with extracts and canned heat. There seems to be a sort of underground system in this town and it is in good working order. Through credentials or acquaintances one can get in touch without much difficulty not only with those hospitable folk who will provide gratuitously anything from a social glass to a social knock-out, but with those more practical cider dealers who dispense the juice for a consideration only. A year ago there were at least twenty places in town where hard cider could be purchased at one dollar per gallon. The marked increase in the demand for hard cider has so extended its production that good quality has largely been sacrificed and the more dangerous prohibition drinks have been substituted.

Elderberry and elderblow wines have come into their own during the past few years. Many farms located back from the improved highways, farms that have been practically abandoned or have been poorly operated by tenants, have responded to the great urge, and vast clusters of elderberry bushes now grow in the hill sections of the township. This annual crop is making it possible to press the wine in barrel lots. The town's aged people, who require some little libation before meals and upon retiring, have long since spurned the regular herb tonics and have adopted the technique of the most discriminating whiskey drinkers. They have become the regular patients of knowing and near-by physicians. They have taken the prescription route to Scotch and rye, and the good doctor's fee is only one dollar for his services. The prevailing price at the drug-store ranges from three to four dollars per pint. One physician in particular has been known to canvass to some extent for this type of practice. The top of his office desk is adorned with a copy of the Holy Bible, which in the minds of his more law-abiding patients at once creates a desert-like atmosphere. However, the middle drawer of the same desk conceals an engraved United States Treasury prescription-blank book, the lone stubs of which indicate a good business in whiskey. Whiskey is prescribed for everything from hemorrhoids to hypochondria. In still another drawer of the same professional desk the doctor always keeps a broken pint, ready for any emergency, social or otherwise.

Operators of alcohol taxis make periodical though infrequent trips to some of the near-by incorporated villages where a variety of vile beverages can be purchased at a low figure and afterward disposed of at highway-construction camps at a neat profit. With all these conditions obtaining, Littletown

is just about as bone dry, or as sopping wet, as it ever was. In the days of local option it made little difference whether the town voted license or no license; the citizen who hankered for a drink was always able to quench his thirst in home territory. It is the same now. There are many damp places scattered over a township which prior to 1920 never at any one time boasted of more than one real oasis in each of the three hamlets. Mere boys were never permitted to enter these ancient places, and they were seldom patronized by the younger men, for they were too much exposed to public view. Now, however, many of the younger set enjoy the adventure of snooping around for a drink in the more secluded nooks of the countryside.

It is far from exaggeration to conclude that the per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages in Littletown is somewhat in excess of what it was twenty years ago. Conditions seem to justify more drinks at a single sitting. In addition to this, there has developed a state of mind that blindly condones the hyper-hypocrisy of it all. Littletown folks seem to want the outside world to understand that their town is dry. Whatever may go on inside is strictly a private matter. The people are opposed to prohibition violations—by others. Some of the members of the W. C. T. U. will tell you that the township is as dry as a cork leg. The local clergymen generally corroborate this theory in sermons, addresses, and reports to the outside world; and deep-quaffing hypocrites contribute regularly to the collections taken for the benefit of the Anti-Saloon League and State reform bodies.

A series of interviews with many of the more prominent residents indicates that there are some who are, and who always have been, prohibitionists. These can see nothing but success in their cause. They are fully convinced that prohibition is actually in full force and effect. There are still more of those who believe that prohibition has failed to some extent and whose heart-to-heart, on-the-quiet conviction is that a change must be made. Outwardly these are dry. Another, still larger group, made up of well-to-do, temperate men, occasional or moderate drinkers, seems to be content with the present situation, and they will remain content as long as a beneficent nature yields her native fruits. This group is on the dry side. There are those wets who were in real sympathy with the Smith program, but whose religious life is coextensive only with its hatred for all things Roman Catholic. These have not yet worn off their first loyalty to the noble experiment. There are still others who are dry solely because of their affiliation with the Republican Party and its local organization. There is, of course, a group of out-and-out wets, and, lastly, there is a rather choice group of open-minded, observing folk who believe in temperance in all things, a reasonable modification of the law, and an immediate return to normality in human conduct.

Throughout its entire history the township has been almost entirely free from any serious crimes. An examination of the criminal records shows a steady decline in minor crimes since 1913. Prior to that date, there seems to have been no direct or indirect connection for the most part between crime and liquor. There were several convictions for public intoxication prior to 1920 and few, if any, since. Public intoxication is as manifest now as a generation ago, but constables do not concern themselves. Liquor or the lack of it has never had any visible effect upon the criminal records of the township. The locality is not so prosperous as it used to be;

there is less money in the town; many of the well-groomed farms of twenty-five years ago are now dilapidated in both land and buildings; tenants are supplanting owners and the farmers' estates of the next generation will require little attention from the probate court. Of course, this may have nothing to do with prohibition, but it makes it a little difficult to believe that the countryside has benefited economically by prohibition.

Neither has prohibition had any noticeable effect upon the general health of the churches. Attendance is as small as it ever has been, perhaps smaller; the same occasional whiffs of alcoholic pungency permeate the church atmosphere at meeting time, and now and then the collection basket is passed, as of yore, for special contributions to be applied to the upkeep of the lobby at the national capital. The local churches have made prohibition their only fetish and total abstinence their greatest virtue. In the last analysis, Littletown has been made safe for hypocrisy. It is at the public dances that prohibition has one of its most positive effects in a social way. The boys somehow manage to bring high-powered beer in their cars and higher-powered gin in ornate hip flasks; and the more adventurous young girls of today are easily beguiled into drinking—drink for drink—with the town's "regular guys." Such a thing, we are well informed, never happened in Littletown before 1920. Then again the town has some evidences that synthetic liquor and young people are bad mixers under rural moons as well as under urban lights. When there are no dances there are always roadhouses not too far away where young couples get the required kick out of existence. No real effort has been made to check these conditions. Parents will not sense the facts—Littletown and all surrounding territory are dry.

Littletown differs slightly, if at all, from the numerous townships in the same section of the country. Select any one of these more or less isolated settlements and make a painstaking investigation. You will make the same discoveries and vary little in your conclusions. You will feel the same sting of repulsiveness too. You will find all of the specimens of the handiwork of a blind fanaticism. Here are some of the exhortations that were thundered from Littletown's pulpits during the last Presidential campaign:

You can't be a true Christian in these days—or a decent American citizen either—unless you vote the straight, dry, Republican ticket next Tuesday. Prohibition and Republicanism have come to be one and the same thing.

The only event comparable to the second coming of our Lord is the coming of prohibition.

Rum is the only issue in this campaign.

I am perfectly willing to state publicly that I shall forever be ashamed of any member of my church who may cast his vote for Smith and booze. No man can be sincerely opposed to this victorious prohibition.

There are several ancient cemeteries in which sleep scores of Littletown's best people. The inscriptions on the quaint stones indicate that many loved their country well and it is purported that they loved their God. Could these early Easterners return, they would find their old home town no more temperate than in their own day and generation. They would be deeply impressed with automobiles, radios, and airplanes, but they might find prohibition to be the most stupefying marvel of them all.

"My Dear Senator"

III

MY DEAR SENATOR: I have your letter in regard to the revolt of various Senators, yourself included, against the nomination of Judge John J. Parker as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. You say that it should improve my opinion of the Senate that so many of its members are willing to look upon this question from the national point of view, and are ready to refuse a seat on the highest bench to a man who has publicly evidenced his readiness to deny to an entire group of our fellow-Americans participation in elections and in the administration of the country. Well, I can only reply that I am happy, of course, that more than seventeen Senators are already on record as opposing the confirmation of Judge Parker because of his views on the colored race. But I should frankly take greater pride in this showing if it were not for the fact that many of these Senators are up for reelection next fall, and that they come from States where the Negro vote is now so large that they fear the loss of the election if the colored people should take it into their heads to rise in rebellion against the Republican Party. In other words, I shall be more impressed if men like Borah of Idaho and Nye of North Dakota, in which States there are few Negroes, oppose confirmation.

That Judge Parker should be defeated admits of no question. There are constantly coming before the Supreme Court of the United States questions vitally affecting the liberty and the pursuit of happiness of our colored Americans. The city of Richmond, for instance, recently enacted an ordinance segregating the Negroes residentially despite the fact that the Supreme Court of the United States has repeatedly held such ordinances unconstitutional and invalid. Other equally important decisions have been in regard to the right of Negroes to participate in primaries and of the political parties to restrict their membership on the basis of color. There are now several important cases on the way up to the Supreme Court which will settle the question whether private covenants arrived at by property owners binding themselves for a period of years, or in perpetuity, not to sell their property to Negroes will or will not be upheld as constitutional. Such cases will ere long come before Judge Parker if he is confirmed. When Judge Parker stated that the colored people of North Carolina did not wish to participate in elections and were ready to be eliminated from politics he uttered a falsehood. When he committed the Republican Party in that State to the lily-white policy he led that party in a complete break with the traditions of its founders. He was certainly traitorous to the memory of Abraham Lincoln and what Lincoln and his war-time associates achieved. How could he conscientiously take the oath that would be administered to him by Chief Justice Hughes to support and uphold the Constitution when he is already on record, as a gubernatorial candidate, in favor of nullifying it in the case of Negroes?

This issue is so vital that it would be a disgrace to the Senate if there were not men in plenty to rise up and pro-

test against Judge Parker's nomination. Beside it the question of Judge Parker's upholding the so-called "yellow-dog" contract is of small moment. Beside this issue it is of far less importance that none of his work as a judge has been marked by the ability or the distinction usually considered essential before a man can be appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States. It would be bad enough to face the fact that we might have thirty years of a judge on this bench who was appointed merely to strengthen the Republican Party in a State which voted for Herbert Hoover. The amazing thing is the prospect that a man who does not propose to permit the Negroes to remain under the protection of the Constitution of the United States may for thirty years to come be voicing in the Supreme Court his race prejudice and antagonism whenever the opportunity offers.

I repeat that every Senator who believes in the Constitution and in simple elemental justice to every American citizen irrespective of race, creed, or color ought to vote against Judge Parker. On the merits of the case, however, and not because of any fear of the immediate political consequences! I notice that the State Chairman of Missouri, Mr. Voorhees, has sent a strong telegram to Washington declaring that "the confirmation of Judge Parker means that the Republican Party might just as well say goodbye to Missouri for the next two or three elections at least. . . . It was a long hard pull to put Missouri into the Republican column. It seems a pity that the fine results achieved through many years of unremitting effort in Missouri on the part of the Republican State organization should be thrown away in two short years." Here again we have the politician's way of looking at the problem. As I have pointed out to you before, you and your associates are prone to look upon every question from the point of view of its immediate effect upon your home fences, or somebody's local political conditions. From the tariff up or down, the whole gamut is run in this spirit. It has, for example, been consistently stated in Washington that the reason why President Hoover has not yet asked the Senate to ratify the new World Court convention was his desire not to embarrass Senator Deneen in his recent and unsuccessful primary contest with Mrs. McCormick. Personally I am not sure that the colored people are united enough to make quite certain the punishment at the polls which the Senators from the border States and those having large masses of colored voters fear. But more important by far than the willingness of some Senators to bolt in fear of punishment is the fact, now established, that the Senate hereafter will take a different attitude toward nominations for the Supreme Court than the purely negative one it has held to heretofore, and the truth that the Negroes for the first time since emancipation have demonstrated to the entire country that they propose to use their political power hereafter in safeguarding their rights. If they succeed in defeating Judge Parker it will be an epoch in the history of the race.

Yours very truly,

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

* The third of a series of articles on the national political situation and the issues it involves.—EDITOR THE NATION.

The Latest Bolshevik Zigzag

By LOUIS FISCHER

Moscow, March 27

NOTHING must be allowed to create the false impression that the Soviet Government has abandoned its program of completely collectivizing agriculture. The recent very radical shift in policy, first announced in Stalin's article on March 2 and finally formulated in the March 15 circular of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, in no way signifies a change of principle. The Bolsheviks have no choice. They can (1) allow village productivity to continue at its present low level, or (2) give the individual mujik freedom to become rich, rent land, and hire labor, or (3) organize agriculture cooperatively. But the Russian village cannot today yield sufficient surpluses for feeding the cities and for export; the rise through personal enrichment of a class of private capitalistic farmers would constitute a political and, more particularly, an economic menace to bolshevism. There remains the third alternative of land cooperatives.

After 55 per cent of all arable land in the Soviet Union had been collectivized within some six months, and after millions of mujiks had entered the *kolkhozi*, or cooperative farms, the party and the government in March suddenly called a halt. Compelling circumstances made retrenchment imperative. This retrenchment along a second line of defense represents one step backward after three or four steps forward. It was accompanied by moderation in the treatment of the church, and by the interdiction of arbitrary, oftentimes illegal and unjustifiable, suppression of private traders and other disfranchised elements. The headlong dash toward socialism which commenced in September, 1929, or thereabouts and developed its full momentum in December has now slowed down to a steady trot. NEP was in the death house impotently awaiting the hangman. But a reprieve arrived at the eleventh hour, for the government still needs the services of the "criminal," private capitalism.

The economic system in Russia is working at maximum pressure. Never was the tension so great; never were such colossal, almost inhuman efforts being made. I sometimes think that the officials, the party leaders, the activists must simply collapse from sheer physical and mental exhaustion. They rarely rest or relax. Yet where man did not complain, the machine began to creak. The weakest section of the machine proved to be that which fed the cities. The food problem had already become aggravated by reason of the fact that products needed within the country were exported to pay for foreign mechanical equipment and tractors. Collectivization complicated matters. Since the government's chief concern is the poor peasant, he was admitted into the *kolkhoz* whether or not he owned a cow or sheep or horse. The mujik who possessed such animals therefore quickly sold them or slaughtered and ate them, for he knew that even without live stock he would not be barred from the collective. Threats from Moscow did no good, for Moscow had committed the grave error of socializing all the peasants' effects at the moment of organizing a collective (thus forming a

commune) instead of merely socializing the wherewithal of production—land, seed, machinery, and draft animals (thus forming an *artel*). This mistake was corrected by Stalin on March 2, but not before a very appreciable percentage of the Soviet Union's live stock had been destroyed. Now the order has gone out that collectives take the form of *artels*, and not communes. Accordingly, cows, goats, geese, chickens (but not horses) were returned to their owners, and immediately more milk, butter, cream, cheese, and poultry appeared on the urban market.

By socializing all the sources of the mujik's salable surplus, the *kolkhoz* movement had almost made superfluous the essential feature of the NEP—the free marketing of peasant goods. It was possible therefore to suppress the city Nepmen by economic and administrative means. Thus, private capitalism on the land and in the metropolises seemed doomed. Contrariwise, the recent resurrection of NEP potentialities in the village by the restoration of live stock inevitably brought with it a relaxation of the persecution of urban private merchants, and both measures are part and parcel of the less militant attitude toward the church. This is the latest Bolshevik zigzag. For a time the curve of socialism went extremely high—almost to the peak of 100 per cent. Today a drop is registered, but not to the former level, for the collectivization of 50 per cent of the acreage under grain and technical cultures withdraws from the Nepman's activity just that much marketable produce. Between the *kolkhoz* and the government there can be no private middleman. Moreover, since there is and could be no guaranty that the Nepman will not again be exposed to suppression, expropriation, and exile at some future upward trend of the socialist curve, he will doubtless refrain from excessive or ostentatious expansion. The city Nepman must grasp the present new opportunity because it is his only straw, but he can have no trust or hope in the future. Gradually, therefore, the utility of private trade to the government may fall so low as to justify complete and irrevocable proscription. Before that consummation, however, the *kolkhozi* must improve and multiply, the cattle and vegetable state farms now organizing or planned must begin to throw their produce on to city tables, and the city cooperatives and state stores must attain greater efficiency, show more initiative, and increase their stock. In the interval, which may last years, private capitalism in Russia will remain anemic, lack resistance, and play the role of a Bolshevik pawn.

The future of socialism in Russia depends on the collectives. During the past six months, however, the Communists behaved as if their life's purpose consisted in embittering the biggest possible number of peasants against this form of economy. They seemed bent on making unpalatable a really attractive type of agricultural organization. Had the government and party waited a single semester, clever agitation and the example of improved conditions might have been sufficient to stimulate a flood of mujiks into the *kolkhozi*. Instead, officials used violence and threats to

obtain quick quantitative results. But there were not enough tractors, trained agronomes, and machines for all the new collectives. The socialization of live stock, poultry, homes, and even rickety furniture violated the deep private-capitalistic instincts of the peasant and blinded him to the advantages of the *artel*. He was ready to resist forced collectivization with arson and murder, if need be. He retaliated, moreover, by massacring cattle wholesale. The city's food supplies diminished. The situation commenced to divert to the village precious governmental energy, care, and man power. The precipitate character of the recent change and the manner in which the government and party introduced it prove that it was highly necessary and long overdue. Stalin displayed fine statesmanship in making the move. But a greater statesman would have made it three months earlier and taken to himself part of the blame for the errors committed by his followers at his instructions or with his approval or at least with his knowledge.

The shift in policy represents a rightward zigzag. It delights those who insist that the tempo of Socialist progress has been excessive. It probably pleases men like Bukharin who urged peasants to enrich themselves and who logically would have opposed rapid collectivization. But the Right wing will not trust Stalin to pursue a Right policy very long; and the Lefts are sour. Already, although the ink of the reforms is scarcely dried, the more radical faction seeks to obstruct them. *Pravda* did not print the government ordinance providing for better treatment of Nepmen. In some provincial districts, Stalin's article and the Central Committee's circular were suppressed by zealots who either objected in principle or feared the effect of furnishing the

mujik with the Kremlin's unbridled strictures against themselves.

These facts and many of a similar nature testify to a large potential of "Leftness" which may act as a guaranty against any permanent or far-reaching swing to the Right. Like much else in Russia, a great deal will be determined by the coming crop. The recent reforms came at the height of preparations for the sowing campaign and occasioned considerable chaos. Stalin swapped horses while fording a stream. But gigantic efforts are being made today to strengthen the collectives and to persuade the peasants outside the *kolkhozi* to plant all their land and to work hard. Those who have faith in the collective will wait hopefully till harvest time and pray for favorable weather.

Apart, however, from the politics and possibilities of the more immediate future, the advantages of collectives over private peasant farming are too obvious in Russia to be doubted. Whoever knows the miserable hut of the mujik, his almost animal standard of living, and his primitive methods of production will realize that practically any change must be an improvement. The *kolkhoz* is a rationalized, scientific substitute for the most backward economic unit in Europe—the Russian village. It will use more machines; it will make better use of its horses; its land will not lie fallow after the time-honored system of pre-Petrian times. In productivity, the collective should be to the mujik's holding as a modern, electrified textile factory is to the hand loom. Soviet authorities tell me that in this first big collective year the average yield per acre in the *kolkhozi* will exceed that of the private farm by 30 per cent. If this is so, then collectivization has won, and Left policies must conquer.

The Modern Critic's Point of View

By C. HARTLEY GRATTAN

I
THE opponents of humanism, if I interpret them rightly, agree that literature is a serious concern of thinking men. But they have a keener sense than the humanists of the fact that literature is but one of the many interests that go to make up a complete intellectual life. Literature provides but one kind of experience. It is not the epitome of all the intellectual interests to which contemporary man is the heir. One who studies literature alone will not thoroughly understand life. The exclusively literary discipline is one of the most narrowing and least productive of all intellectual disciplines.

A major intellectual disaster of our time is the compartmentalization of the minds of the so-called leaders of thought. They tend to be superlatively well informed about their narrow specialty and actively resist the intrusion of uninformed non-specialists into their domain. But they do not hesitate to affirm the truth of traditional and outworn ideas in fields other than their own. This characteristic is excellently illustrated by those physicists now so actively engaged in supporting antiquated ideas in the field of religion. But nowhere is this compartmentalization more evident than in the field of literary criticism. In reading some of the narrowly educated young critics whose minds have been

sharpened and polished by a particularistic discipline, you feel that a needle is being applied to the probing of a haystack. It is one of the major ironies of current literary disputation that however high the ideals of the younger critics may reach, their practice is earthbound by the fact that they are, after all, men living in a man-made world. And if we compose our ideal of perfection from literary materials we are apt, by the very nature of the exercise, to arrive at a formulation considerably at variance with the possibilities of the human animal.

The modern necessity is to integrate our minds and buttress ourselves against the tendencies toward diffusion, disorder, and discontinuity. This applies in all phases of intellectual endeavor. Consequently, it is the first necessity of a rounded literary criticism that it be grounded in as wide a knowledge of the ancillary sciences dealing with man and culture as is compatible with an exhaustive knowledge of the writer or the literary object being criticized. As has been remarked, literature is but one phase of the experience open to man. This statement locates literature where it belongs in the total life of the individual. And since it is integral to man and culture it must be approached with all the weapons available for the understanding of both man and culture. To define it as something apart from both is to

make it something irrelevant to man and the concern of nobody but a group of literate eremites.

The view of the position of literature here set forth does not translate it into a subordinate part of psychology, sociology, or anthropology. It simply advocates the placing of the findings of these and all other contributory sciences in the hands of the literary critic. Superficially this ideal would seem to be at wide variance with the opinion of the most conspicuous advocates of the newer approaches to criticism, but it is recognized as valid by T. S. Eliot. In the *Bookman* for November, 1929, he wrote: "There are other branches of knowledge (or at least of science) some acquaintance with which you take for granted in any applicant whom you may employ as literary critic [he has previously named biology, anthropology, and philology], especially, of course, psychology, particularly analytical psychology. All of the studies I have mentioned and more do themselves touch the edges and handle some of the problems of criticism; so conversely the critic is distinguished, first, by the current notions which he shares with all educated or half-educated persons, such as the notion of evolution, and by the number and variety of sciences of which he has to know a little. And he has to know them not in order to do their work for them, but to collaborate—and also in order that he may know where to stop. We require much general knowledge in order to see the limits of our particular ignorance." The upshot of this is that, though literary criticism need not be written in terms derived from any one or even all of these disciplines, the light they shed upon the central problems of criticism must become available to the critic.

II

The conception of literature as a phase of experience requires elaboration. Experience, to borrow I. A. Richards's usage of the word in this connection, is "any occurrence in the mind. It is equivalent to 'mental state or process'." The ultimate purpose behind all intellectual activity is the clarification of experience with the object of understanding it and giving it meaning. Literature serves the purpose of giving us vicarious experience, of clarifying experience, and of lending it meaning. In addition it offers a peculiar sort of pleasure. It offers us in concentrated form a range of experiences which, in all probability, would not otherwise be open to us in the circumscribed lives we are forced to live, even in such a mobile civilization as the present one. Furthermore, the complete artist (in contrast to the reporter of life, whose work, particularly in the novel, is ubiquitous at present) has exercised some definite principle of selection in which the guiding light has been his idea of what the material signifies. By selection he interprets life; he bodies forth his peculiar view of life by bringing to the reader's attention those aspects of the limitless range of material he might use which seem to him to carry the highest emotional and intellectual implications. The reader, then, lays himself open to an experience which is heightened beyond life and which yet is life. It is a legitimate abstraction from the flux and flow of life. And it is an inescapable aspect of art. Even the artist who expends his highest powers in attempting to render a welter of "meaningless" episodes, a discontinuous flux of events, has arbitrarily selected those elements in experience which best objectify his vision. There never yet has been a complete, exact, unbiased reproduction of actual life

in literature and it is inconceivable that there ever will be.

Faced with a literary object the critic may approach it from two angles and he may choose to write from either or both in any given essay. I. A. Richards states the angles as follows: "In a full critical statement which states not only that an experience is valuable in certain ways, but also that it is caused by certain features in a contemplated object, the part which describes the value of the experience we shall call the *critical* part. That which describes the object we shall call the *technical* part." Naturally the bulk of what is generally written as criticism consists of the first kind. And into that part of the statement which is the "critical" part the critic incorporates his sociological and psychological diagnosis of the artist as a man in society and of the work of art itself.

The crux of the problem, however, lies in the matter of the "value of the experience." It is in the attribution of the value of a work of art that critics disagree. For the attributed value is, and of necessity must be, contingent upon the complexity of the mental development of the critic. By complexity I do not mean intricacy; I mean the totality of the intellectual experience of the critic. And it is precisely at this point that the matter of the possible contributions of the ancillary disciplines reenters. For since these disciplines are to serve the critic as tools for understanding, tools with which he is to conduct his critical operation, it naturally follows that a critic provided with such tools will render a quite different verdict from the critic lacking them. And in the opinion of the writer the verdict of the former will be much more sound. Into this complexity of mind there will enter (it almost goes without saying) all the literary information, biographical knowledge, and sociological erudition of which the critic is possessed.

The resultant criticism will be a long way from impressionism and equally distant from dogmatic criticism, which I take to be an exercise in measuring the agreement or disagreement of the literary object with a predetermined set of arbitrary rules. It will differ from impressionism in that it will not be grounded in the emotions but will be the product of controlled knowledge operating to determine the worth of the experience offered by the literary object. And it will differ from dogmatic criticism in that the critic will not have any fixed preconceptions as to what the experience offered should be nor about the technical means by which the experience is rendered.

A critic of the type I am describing will be above all *experimental* in his attitude. The very nature of his equipment will make that attitude inevitable. He will be receptive, eclectic, and as sympathetic to the traditional as to the experimental. On the other hand he will not tend to accept the traditional because it conforms to certain forms of value which have been adjudged as of significance in the past. He will, indeed, be highly discriminative of the traditional as it appears in his time, because he will, in so far as it is repetitive in value, recognize that the author has presented nothing new. And he will be equally skeptical of the experimental because he will demand from it new and valuable experience as well as technical virtuosity. With regard to the latter matter, he will examine technical innovations and adjudge them according to their merits as vehicles of communication.

As an eclectic he will not be tempted to stand forth as

the apologist for one particular mode of literary practice. He will find valuable experience in realistic works as well as in romantic works; in the classics as well as in contemporary writings; in the traditional as well as in the experimental. Indeed he will have to face but one constant temptation and that is a too great receptivity to the "classics" written in his own time, which will, inevitably, embody those values with which he is intimately familiar from living in constant contact with them. His judgments of these writings will be the final test of his merit as a critical guide.

The written conclusions of a critic operating in this fashion will be a record of the peculiar value of the experience offered by a given object or group of objects, a statement of the skill or lack of skill with which the author has communicated the experience to the reader, and frequently a statement of how the strengths or deficiencies arose out of the unique situation in which the author functioned and the peculiarities of his personality. Such a statement will be fairly inclusive, for the critic will have defined (a) the value of the experience; (b) the skill of the communication; (c) the sociological setting in which the work was produced and its effect on the object; (d) the psychological constitution of the author and its relation to his work. Naturally the reports of such a critic will have literary significance in themselves in so far as his own skill in communication is developed and in proportion to his ability to detect and express the values in the object; and the latter will have direct relation to the complexity of his mind.

III

It may prove revealing to examine this program in the light of the issues raised by Gorham B. Munson writing in the *Bookman* for December, 1929. What audience will such a critic have in mind? He will have the only audience any critic can hope to have—those persons intelligently interested in books and to whom reading is one of the modes of deepening, strengthening, and clarifying experience. He will not appeal to those who read to kill time. Neither will he appeal to those to whom literature is a source for moral precepts or to whom the study of literature must result in a pseudo-religious discipline. Nor will this critic appeal to those whose interest in literature has been particularized by allegiance to some literary cult or program, except as they are interested in literature in general. In fact, such a critic will appeal to a decided minority in any social group. Critics have never had a wide appeal. It is idle to suppose that they ever will have.

What will be this critic's practical object? I think that this question has already been answered by implication. His practical object will be the bringing to the attention of his readers the values he has detected in the writings he has subjected to scrutiny. In dealing practically with current literature, he will serve a selective function. And by the very seriousness of his point of view he will disagree as frequently as not with the judgments of the critics who write of books chiefly as news. This critic will not advise his readers about the fashionableness of this book or that. He will be concerned only with its worth. Anything else is mere by-play, though the writer would be the last one to minimize the importance of literary by-play.

What scheme of values will he support? He will not support any rigidly formulated scheme of values. He will

point out that he has already ruled such rigid schemes out of his literary interest by placing the emphasis on *the value of literature as experience*. This change of emphasis relieves him of the necessity of measuring a work of art by its agreement with a predetermined scheme of values. It concentrates his attention upon the worth of the experience.

Finally, we may examine this critical position in the light of three dominant concerns of American criticism as formulated by Dr. Norman Foerster. First, what is the relation of literature and morality? Our critic will dissociate his criticism from any rigidly formulated code of morality. The judgment of the value of literature as experience does not necessitate a judgment of its "morality," for he will have escaped the confusion of mind which identifies contemporary folkways with what is moral. He will be keenly aware of the fact that all valuable experience to be derived from literature is not to be confined within the conventions of the group of which he is a member. He will recognize the relativity of morals and also that what his group may regard as a presentation of most "immoral" conduct may offer him more valuable experience than endless perfectly "moral" objects. On the other hand he will recognize that a true work of art has an inherent morality of its own—a morality which proceeds from the fundamental integrity of the artist. But it is impossible to measure this by external codifications.

What is the relation of literature to reality? Our critic will maintain that literature has a close and intimate connection with reality. But he will not be blinded by the apparent dissimilarities of authors. To use examples with which all readers will be familiar, he will find it within the range of his interests to examine closely the work of both Theodore Dreiser and James Branch Cabell. He will not consider it proof of a lack of discrimination if a critic or reader admires both of these writers, for he will recognize that both proceed from the same reality and both offer a selective presentation of that reality. He will see that both are creators of valuable literature for their times (to keep close to the ground). Dreiser happens to project his view of life on a plane which we call realistic, and consequently his novels contain a great deal of material from which we derive the secondary pleasure of recognition. Cabell, on the other hand, prefers to offer his criticism of life in romances, in "flights from reality" more apparent than real, for if closely read he offers as much criticism of life as Dreiser.

What is the relation of literature to the national spirit? Our critic will differ from the critics who came to notice in this country after 1910 in not emphasizing the elements of "nationalism" in literature. He will, however, recognize that every country produces its peculiarly national writers and that all writers within a given country respond to and embody in their work the national *ethos*. In considering the relation of a work of art to its sociological and psychological genesis, he will isolate and define its embodiment or rejection of the national *ethos*. But he will not be inclined to praise or condemn a work of art solely because of its peculiarly national quality.

In essence, what this critic will do is to return to a position roughly resembling that of the critics in English up to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Those critics specialized in plain good sense. The modern writer of criticism will buttress his good sense with the solid and relevant contributions of the sciences ancillary to literature. He will

take a comprehensive view of his task. But his primary purpose, on the positive side, will be to communicate to his readers something of the peculiar pleasure which is to be derived from writers of merit.

In the Driftway

NO census-taker has yet snared the Drifter, nor is one likely to, for a census-taker must have some definite clue as to the whereabouts of his quarry and the Drifter's trail is hard to follow. He has neither a palpable home of his own, nor does he command on his wanderings that attention which would remind his pro tem host to point him out when the census man comes round. The Drifter is almost sorry, as he would enjoy answering a few questions. He is nearly tempted to break the laws of his nature and put down roots somewhere—small, tentative roots which need not bind. But he is deterred by the knowledge that, for him, the putting down of roots would have as questionable results as the instinctive home-making of a dog when he turns himself about on the floor before lying down to sleep.

* * * * *

THERE was a time when a sudden question would have alarmed the Drifter as being too reminiscent of a certain stuffy schoolroom presided over by a benign man, whose benignity had limits. But there comes a time in everyone's life when questions are likely to change from a form of persecution to a form of flattery. The Drifter, though he has long since quitted the former state, has never properly arrived at the latter, for no one ever thinks to ask him anything. It is years since he has been asked a question more serious than "Light or dark meat?" or "How will you have your tea?" People never ask him the time, and even those who have lost their way in a strange town do not turn to him for help. They seem to know by instinct that he, too, is generally a stranger here. Once, indeed, some one asked him whether it was difficult to get to Abyssinia. "Why, no," he said, "you just go down the Red Sea and turn to the right." But the next week the man left for Alaska, without asking for directions. He is still there and sends an occasional post card, crisply informative.

* * * * *

IN all fairness, though, the Drifter must admit certain printed questions that find their way through the mail. These, indeed, are rarely of the flattering kind. Some are calculated to inspire terror: "Are you prepared for the Judgment Day? Buy our Bibles." Some allow a note of hope: "Are you a social failure? Learn to play a musical instrument by mail." The ones that the Drifter likes best, however, are the simple ones such as those which come patiently, year in and year out, from a shop which he has never visited: "Have you lost your umbrella? Let us replace it." He has never kept an umbrella and can hardly begin now.

* * * * *

TO return to the census, there are two questions which it would give him the greatest pleasure to answer. They are: "Were you at work yesterday?" and "Have you a radio?" The answer to both is No.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Thanks from Haiti

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: To the genuine regret of all those who have had the privilege of coming in contact with her, Mrs. Helena Hill Weed is leaving Haiti tomorrow.

This third visit that Mrs. Weed has paid our country has appreciably strengthened the admiration and gratitude of the Haitian public in general, and of the Haitian press in particular, for the fearless and generous manner in which *The Nation* has championed Haiti's cause ever since its first protests aroused your attention and indignation. And now that President Hoover's commission has so well fulfilled its mission we wish to assure you of our conviction that it is in no small measure due to your publication's whole-hearted and untiring defense of our interests that certain of our most pressing problems are about to be satisfactorily solved.

By her keen insight into these problems, combined with her unerring tact and genuine human sympathy, your able collaborator, Mrs. Weed, is more firmly entrenched than ever in the esteem and affection of the Haitian people. Her keen intelligence, which gave her a thorough grasp of the Haitian situation, is no less the subject of our admiration than is the sympathy she has invariably displayed toward our oppressed nation. Such finely balanced qualities of head and heart are as admirable as they are rare, and we congratulate *The Nation* upon having so invaluable a collaborator as Mrs. Weed.

To you and to her, and through you both to *The Nation*, the Port au Prince press voices Haiti's deep appreciation of the moral and material support you have unstintingly given its cause, and it is convinced that time will only serve to strengthen the bonds of friendship existing between us.

ERNEST G. CHAUVET, Editor *Le Nouvelliste*

CHARLES MORAVIA, Editor *Le Temps*

SEYMOUR PRADEL, President The National League for Constitutional Action.

Port au Prince, March 17

"My Dear Senator"

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: If I am right in assuming that "My Dear Senator" in *The Nation* of March 26 was addressed to Senator Dill there is a little discrepancy to which I should like to call your attention. I refer to the two sentences: "You repeat that the sugar-beet industry is highly important to your State, and that the existing tariff does not enable the sugar-beet farmers to make a living"; and "Can you complain if people ask whether it is merely because you wish to get a few thousand dollars for the lumber men and beet growers of your State?"

Now look at the statistics of the United States Department of Agriculture for 1925 and 1927 and see how "highly important" sugar beets are in the agriculture of the State of Washington. These statistics show a total of 1,287 acres in sugar beets in the State, with a production of only 8,263 tons yearly. There are only two small areas in the whole State where farmers even try to grow them and they don't do a very good job of it compared with Colorado sugar-beet farmers, who get eleven tons to the acre and produce more than two million tons a year. No one familiar with farming in the State of Washington would be likely to tell you that sugar-beet growing is very important; and if you want to run your finger still farther down the statistical

table, you'll find that except for Arizona, Nevada, and Oregon, which grow no sugar beets worth tabling, Washington has the lowest production among the Western States.

But in the same breath with sugar beets you mention lumber interests. Now you're talking! Run down the list of lumber-producing States in the West (according to the 1929 Year-book) and notice that Washington topped the list with a production of 7,324,862 board feet during 1927, more than three million board feet in excess of its nearest competitor and neighbor, Oregon.

Beet growers and lumber men, indeed! Might as well group salmon and wheat together in Kansas!

Spokane, April 2

EDITH D. ABBOTT

Detroit and the Reds

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: On Thursday, March 6, I was on the streets of our downtown section to watch the demonstration of the unemployed. Many citizens, myself included, had previously waited on our mayor, our police commissioner, and our superintendent of police with the request that the crowd be handled sympathetically and no violence done by the police force.

There were many acts of violence committed by the police on that day, including the usual clubbings, but what struck us observers as being both new and amazing, and therefore worthy of comment, was the fact that at point after point mounted policemen in groups of three, four, and five rode on to the sidewalks and charged straight into the crowds of orderly, peaceful people.

The Detroit branch of the American Civil Liberties Union has sworn affidavits of these and other brutalities of the police on that day.

Detroit, March 12

CAROLINE PARKER

President Masaryk

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In an editorial in *The Nation* of March 12, on page 285, you charge President Masaryk of Czecho-Slovakia with "the forcible wiping out of all traces of German influence and culture in Prague." That is a charge which, it seems to me, disproves itself by its very enormity. According to recent reports the German university and the German institute of technology at Prague are still in existence; in the winter semester of 1927-28 the former had 4,073 students and the latter 2,087. German schools, theaters, newspapers, German speech—all these are still to be found in Prague, although the Germans represent but a small fraction of the population of the city. The only monument of German culture in Prague that has really been "forcibly wiped out," so far as I know, is the tall Pillar of the Virgin Mary, erected by the Hapsburgs as a memorial to their victory over the Bohemian Protestants in 1620. When the Hapsburgs fell, their pillar fell with them.

On February 15 when Dr. Ludwig Czech (a German, in spite of the name), the Minister of Social Welfare, celebrated his sixtieth birthday, President Masaryk in a personal letter wished him good health and long life, and concluded with the following words: "By entering the Cabinet you have contributed to the rapprochement not only of the two Socialist parties but also of the two races, on whose mutual amity the future happiness of our Republic is largely dependent." I do not know that President Masaryk has ever been faithless to his professions.

Washington, March 13

J. J. KRAL

When writing to advertisers please mention The Nation

A Trip to Russia

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: *The Nation* has become so much the source of information to which all who are interested in Russian affairs look for authoritative news and significant comment that I thought you might be willing to bring to the attention of your readers a cooperative trip that is being planned by a group of economists, primarily to learn at the source more fully about the Gosplan and the progress that is being made under it.

The party will start from Berlin July 7, reaching Moscow July 9, and will devote thirty-five days to the study of conditions in Moscow, Leningrad, the leading cities along the Volga between Nizhni-Novgorod and Stalingrad, and the iron, steel, and coal region of the Donetz basin, ending the journey at Kiev. Full information may be obtained by writing to me in care of Columbia University, Department of Political Science.

New York, March 31

HENRY R. SEAGER

Contributors to This Issue

WILLIAM W. NORTON is a member of the bar of New York State.

LOUIS FISCHER, Moscow correspondent of *The Nation*, will soon publish "The Soviets in World Affairs."

C. HARTLEY GRATTAN is the editor of a forthcoming book, "The Critique of Humanism."

EDA LOU WALTON is assistant professor of English at Washington Square College, New York University.

GRANVILLE HICKS is assistant professor of English at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

GEORGE E. G. CATLIN is a member of the boards of directors and of editors of the *Realist*.

THE LOVE POEMS OF JOANNES SECUNDUS

Translated by F. W. Wright

AN unabridged and unexpurgated edition of these famous love poems, translated for the first time from the Latin. Through the lines of these frank and rhythmic litanies of love can be heard the irresistible chuckle of the dextrous author as he thumbs his artistic nose at the pedagogues. The poems are presented in four groups: "The Kisses," "The Loves," "Occasional Poems," and "The Bridal Night." *Beautifully bound, jacketed, and boxed for gift purposes.* \$5.00

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IS PROHIBITION DEMOCRATIC?

The editor of *Democratic Youth* examines important questions of public interest each month, draws his own conclusions, and invites his readers to do the same. Of prohibition he says, in the April issue, "The important question for the voter is not whether he wants to drink. . . . The liquor question alone is comparatively trivial; if there were nothing else to consider I would be a prohibitionist."

If you are young in years or in spirit you will enjoy the refreshing discussions in *Democratic Youth*, published at West Liberty, Kentucky, for young idealists who still believe in democracy. The subscription price is only \$1 a year; three years for \$2.

Books, Films, Drama

Of Changing Seasons

By EDA LOU WALTON

Darkness was symbol. Now the low full moon
Lifts a white grail above the stony hill,
And where the lips denied, they must affirm,
And where the heart was stoic, it must turn
Tearful from out its fortress. All too soon
The frail leaves feather the far trees and burn
On the near maples; this, the sweet hour, will
Shelter within the valley while the air
Gathers again to snow. And heart compelled
Now by the downy forest soon is knelled.
And heart and moon and stony hill must quell
Always their earliest singing, black their glow
Even when the smothered choir shall swell, and slow
Flowering become a madness to unfurl
The bright cocoon of summer, to unwind
The silver-threaded orchards, and trees twirl
In radiance down the valleys. Alas, the mind
Delirious then with fragrance and delight,
Even in its ripest hour thinks on night,
Recalls a stark December, and remembers
Darkness was symbol.

Last Testament

Assorted Articles. By D. H. Lawrence. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

THE fugitive pieces gathered here add little to Lawrence's message to the world. Had he lived longer it seems unlikely that his reputation would have greatly increased. His future writings would probably have been mere repetitions of his earlier work, would have come as anti-climax. He had shot his bolt.

Among the articles in the present volume the two that I find most attractive are a portrait, at once delightful and scathing, called *Laura Philippine*; and the autobiographical sketch. The latter tells of the "pneumonia illness" which attacked Lawrence at seventeen and at twenty-five, damaging his health for life; and it gives also the reasons why he felt that he could not "rise in the world and become even a little popular and rich." The other articles are, in the main, preachments, passionate declamations. No matter what his ostensible topic may be, Lawrence keeps returning to his central doctrines—that life must be a direct sensuous contact with people and with nature, that life must be a flow, that sex must be a flow, a real flow of sympathy, generous and warm, that we must stick up for our own instinctive feelings against the things we are taught, that we have shut Life out from our living, and that we must struggle down to the heart of things, where the everlasting flame is, and kindle ourselves another beam of light.

Lawrence sometimes talks in the terms of the social reformer, but we cannot deal with him as we can with the usual social reformer. We are not to pin him down to particulars, to expose his contradictions, to ask him what, concretely and specifically, his passionate phrases may imply. For Lawrence's strength surely did not lie in any ability to reason closely and carefully. I do not believe he ever once hesitated before making a sweeping generalization to think whether or not it was quite true. Indeed, I suspect that for what is called reasoning he had at bottom very little respect; temperamentally he must have de-

spised logic, or the exact mathematics, the patient verifications, that are necessary for the conclusions of science. Much of his influence came from his "mysticism," but this mysticism often reduced itself, on examination, to mere vagueness and unintelligibility, a persistent inability or refusal to reduce his sweeping indictments to specific terms. What does he mean, for example, when he says: "So intense and final is the modern white man's conviction, his internal conviction, that he is *not* a man, that he dares anything on earth except be a man"? Or what does he mean when he tells us that "people flaunt their bodies to show how unphysical they are," or that "the young are, in a subtle way, physically repulsive to one another, the girl to the man and the man to the girl"? How did Lawrence know all that? What reason have we for supposing any of these statements, as generalizations, to be true? Are we being asked to apply the principle of "*credo quia absurdum*"? Must we assume the mystical truth to be the exact opposite of the literal truth? We are obliged to come back to the conclusion that we cannot judge Lawrence's message by any literal standards. Or rather, we must adopt the standard that Walter Lippmann once applied to Mencken—we must judge him as we would a barrage of artillery, for the general destruction rather than for the accuracy of the individual shots.

Lawrence thought of himself as a rebel against tradition, but he wrote in a tradition with deep historic roots. Irving Babbitt would have little trouble in showing, for example, that a part of Lawrence's attitude and many of his ideas stemmed ultimately from Rousseau. But we need not go so far back. He was essentially in accord with Pater's doctrine that the artist should burn with a hard gemlike flame; and in form of utterance if not in doctrine he belonged in the tradition of Carlyle and Nietzsche. In brief, he was a prophet of our day. He impressed his personality and his doctrines on his generation by returning with passionate insistence to the same everlasting preachments. He was against routine, against mechanization, against stock emotions, against everything that was sheeplike and safe and "nice" and dull. He was a prod and a gadfly, and he set an example of splendid courage. He felt that we were all somehow trapped by civilization, and he shook the bars of the cage and shouted for release.

HENRY HAZLITT

The Sensibility of Proust

The Sweet Cheat Gone. By Marcel Proust. Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff. Albert and Charles Boni. \$3.

"MADEMOISELLE ALBERTINE is gone!" With this exclamation the penultimate volume of Proust's great romance begins, and though the author is not accustomed to commence in any fashion so simply dramatic the sentences which follow instantaneously recapture for the reader that particular mood of elegiac contemplation which has been, throughout, so consistently and so charmingly maintained.

A moment ago, as I lay analyzing my feelings, I had supposed that this separation without a final meeting was precisely what I had wished, and, as I compared the mediocrity of the pleasures that Albertine afforded me with the richness of the desires which she prevented me from realizing, had felt that I was being subtle, had concluded that I did not wish to see her again, that I no longer loved her. But now these words: "Mademoiselle Albertine has gone!" had expressed themselves in my heart with an anguish so keen that I would not be able to endure it for any length of time. . . . Tender toward myself as my mother had been toward my dying grandmother, I said to myself with that anxiety which we feel to prevent a person whom we love

from suffering: "Be patient for just a moment, we shall find something to take the pain away; don't fret, we are not going to allow you to suffer like this."

Proust has many remarkable excellences, but there is no passage which better illustrates one of the most striking—which is his power to communicate an egotistical absorption in the poignancy of a cherished pain. Nor does he, in the whole of the present volume—devoted exclusively to the history of the gradual fading of the narrator's love for Albertine—once fail to maintain in the reader an interest, almost equal to his own, in the intricate involutions of a spirit which is nursing its sorrows in order that it may note and describe the effect of each fluctuation of pain.

In the tenth volume of a continuous novel one would hardly expect to find anything which is strictly new, and indeed one does not, but one seems almost to do so, for so rich is the originality of Proust that, as one reads the successive sections of his work, it is almost impossible to refrain from concentrating one's attention upon different aspects of his originality and from taking each individual volume as an illustration of the particular quality which one has in mind. Certainly, for example, nothing about his work is more striking than the particular form assumed by the sensibility which informs it, and certainly "The Sweet Cheat Gone" is at least an example as striking as any other of the nature of that sensibility peculiar to him. It is obvious that Proust finds in contemplation the meaning of life, and that of all things Love is, for him, the one which can be made the most fruitful object of contemplation. But he has achieved his own selection from among those many simples from which love is said to be compounded, and no little part of the unique experience of reading his work is the result of sharing with him the emotions of that very particular kind of love which he celebrates.

The value which he puts upon it is as high as the value assigned by the most extravagant of romantics, and yet Proustian love shows not a trace of many of the elements which usually accompany and which are, perhaps, usually thought necessary to a love so romantic. It has no reticences, for Proust analyzes even the most intimate of its sensual aspects; it has no selflessness, for it makes little pretence to unselfish desire for the happiness or welfare of the beloved object; and it is, moreover, completely dissociated from the idea of permanence, for Proust, even in the midst of his transports, never fails to remember that the time will come when the desire which masters him will seem distant and incomprehensible. Proustian love has then no rational element and no rationalized value, yet it has a power to absorb and a power to torture which cannot belong to sense, simple and unadorned. To the making of it has gone (besides sense) only sentiment, but it has become, without the aid of moral ideas, something marvelously elaborate and something well-nigh unique in literature.

Perhaps this love of his, this emotion which is so obviously neither the sacrament of the romanticists nor the devaluated amusement of the cynic, might indeed be made the type of his sensibility, for in many other respects also he manages to achieve an attitude poised somewhere between the extremes which have so often seemed inevitable alternatives. Disillusioned enough he was with many things, with morals for example, and he had neither any code nor any standards besides those which his tastes supplied. Yet there were capacities and faiths which he still retained. He still believed, for example, in the sufficiency of the senses and in the value of art. He never, like so many moderns, found himself in a world limited and debased by the impossibility of escape from psychology, anthropology, and Freudianism. The world was still absorbingly, still amazingly, interesting. Women, most women, were to him magical and mysterious. Conversations were witty, salons were thrilling, and artists—even contemporary artists—incalculably

great. In a word, he respected his desires, his tastes, and his amusements, and hence, though experience might be predominantly painful, it was neither meaningless nor mean. And that perhaps is the secret of the individual charm of his world. It is one viewed with the critical freedom of modern thought and one in which skepticism rules. Yet it is somehow glamorous as well.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

The Rediscovery of America

The Bridge. By Hart Crane. Horace Liveright. \$2.50.

THOUGH a number of critics have "discovered" Hart Crane, his has been one of the esoteric names. "The Bridge" should change all that. There is no good reason why he should be the private property and more-or-less-patronized poet of a few of the intelligentsia. His work is difficult, but it is not obscure in any cheap or wanton fashion. Much contemporary poetry is more difficult, and there is very little that is so rewarding.

Perhaps a reviewer can perform no better service than to outline the poem. The opening stanzas of the poem, *To Brooklyn Bridge*, suggest the nature of Mr. Crane's vision and its elusiveness:

How many dawns, chill from his rippling rest
The seagull's wings shall dip and pivot him,
Shedding white rings of tumult, building high
Over the chained bay waters Liberty—

Then, with inviolate curve, forsake our eyes
As apparitional as sails that cross
Some page of figures to be filed away;
—Till elevators drop us from our day . . .

The seagull, it is to be noted, remains a seagull and yet fulfils another purpose. This is the way Mr. Crane uses symbols. The picture of the bridge at night, sharp in its compact imagery, reveals the same quality:

Again the traffic lights that skim thy swift
Unfractioned idiom, immaculate sigh of stars,
Beading thy path—condense eternity:
And we have seen night lifted in thine arms.

The final stanza indicates that the bridge is a kind of cosmic symbol as well as a symbol of the American spirit:

O Sleepless as the river under thee,
Vaulting the sea, the prairies' dreaming sod,
Unto us lowliest sometime sweep, descend
And of the curviship lend a myth to God.

With *Ave Maria*, the soliloquy of Columbus as he returns from his first voyage, the lines swell in somber dignity. Columbus, bringing back Cathay, remembers that the secret may yet be buried at the bottom of the sea. He recalls his thoughts when land was sighted and warns Ferdinand against reckless exploitation of the new continent. Finally his voice lifts in prayer, which becomes a petition on behalf of the questing mind:

O Thou who sleepest on Thyself, apart
Like ocean athwart lanes of death and birth,
And all the eddying breath between dost search
Cruelly with love thy parable of man,—
Inquisitor! incognizable Word
Of Eden and the enchained Sepulcher,
Into thy steep savannahs, burning blue,
Utter to loneliness the sail is true.

The next section, *Powhatan's Daughter*, is divided into five poems. The basic symbolism here, as suggested by the first poem and the marginal annotations, is sexual. The theme is the American continent, the very soil itself, its traditions and potentialities. One of the poems, *The River*, begins with

an expressionistic treatment of a railroad train, turns to a passage on the hobos, "born pioneers in time's despite," and ends with a description of the Mississippi, which is also a description of the flow of these wanderers. The hobos, "who have touched her, knowing her without name," are unconsciously in love with this America. The Dance, which follows, celebrates a conscious love, such as was possible in the "tribal morn" of the Indians.

Cutty Sark, a short poem with a dream organization, sings of the sailing-ship days. But this is little more than a preface to Cape Hatteras. Here, taking Whitman as his inspiration, Crane grapples directly with the theme of contemporary America. He tells how after our wanderings we return home:

... to read you, Walt,—knowing us in thrall
To that deep wonderment, our native clay
Whose depth of red, eternal flesh of Pocahontus—
Those continental folded eons, surcharged
With sweetness below derricks, chimneys, tunnels—
Is veined by all that time has really pledged us.

He speaks of the machine age and the dual effect of science:

Seeing himself an atom in a shroud—
Man hears himself an engine in a cloud!

America is not "our empire yet, but labyrinth," and Whitman's eyes, like Columbus's, ferret out the path. We have our machines, such as the airplane:

The soul, by naphtha fledged into new reaches
Already knows the closer clasp of Mars.

But as Columbus saw the possibility of evil in the discovery of the new continent, so the poet perceives the potential menace of aircraft:

While Iliads glimmer through eyes raised in pride
Hell's belt springs wider into heaven's plumed side.

Crane describes the airplane and the dirigible, "enormous Lounger of pendulous auroral beaches." He reminds the flier that he is commissioned "to conjugate infinity's dim marge anew." He describes, once more using the aid of typographical arrangement, the fall of a plane. Then he returns to Whitman, speaking of Whitman's meaning to him, comparing Whitman to the bridge, defining Whitman's message to the American people:

O, something green,
Beyond all sesames of science was thy choice
Wherewith to bind us throbbing with one voice,
New integers of Roman, Viking, Celt—

The poem ends with the poet going—

onward without halt,—
Not soon, nor suddenly,—no, never to let go
My hand
in yours,
Walt Whitman—
so—

Three songs follow. After them comes Quaker Hill, contrasting the mystic and poet with the American business man, calling on the poet to transmute silence with "that stilly note of pain that Emily, that Isadora knew." Then The Tunnel brings us again into the confusion of urban civilization. In the subway train comes the apparition of Poe, and the poem ends with the contemplation of the bridge.

The last stanzas of The Tunnel provide the transition from the hectic, expressionistic description of subway hubbub to the noble, chorale-like movement of Atlantis. Here is the bridge again:

Through the bound cable strands, the arching path
Upward, veering with light, the flight of strings,—
Taut miles of shuttling moonlight syncopate
The whispered rush, telepathy of wires.

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Up the index of night, granite and steel—
Transparent meshes—fleckless the gleaming staves—
Sibylline voices flicker, waveringly stream
As though a god were issue of the strings.

Slowly, with dignity, in lines compact with thought, in phrases soaked with implications, the poem moves to its ultimate, mystic vision, in which the bridge, symbol of all that America may be, is symbol also of that union of the individual soul with the eternal reality which is the goal of every mystic's quest.

Long essays could be, and one trusts will be, written about "The Bridge." There is not an angle from which it cannot profitably be scrutinized. Its technique should be studied, to bring out the principles by which the variations of rhythm and rhyme are determined. Its imagery, as even a few quotations show, is sound and amazingly original. The methods of its symbolism should be considered. Its philosophical implications are worthy of comment. Its affirmativeness should be contrasted with the elegiacism of most contemporary poetry. But we need not worry; all this will be done, for "The Bridge" is not a poem to go unrecognized.

GRANVILLE HICKS

Wisdom of an Elder Statesman

Africa and Some World Problems. By J. C. Smuts. Oxford University Press. \$2.50.

THIS book contains a collection of addresses about subjects superficially at least very heterogeneous—Livingstone, Africa, the League of Nations, Democracy. Anyone, moreover, who would detect an inner unity, believing that a man's attitude to African native problems will excellently indicate how truly he is a democrat, may well be deceived. When he is discussing matters non-African General Jan Christiaan Smuts is the great liberal Elder Statesman, the show-piece to prove the success of the British Commonwealth idea. When, however, he is discussing Africa, local politics come into play, and General Smuts becomes very definitely a South African advocating the territorial segregation of the black and white races. This policy is quite impracticable in view of the labor situation. Hence General Smuts would make the rather significant exception of the Negro engaged in industrial labor. But at least his wife and children are to remain territorially segregated under tribal conditions; the Negro laborer will presumably see them, a few hundred miles away, in his spare moments. As General Smuts says, "The new policy of native self-government [by disfranchised and segregated natives] will provide the natives with plenty of bones to chew at and plenty of matter to wrangle over." It surely will. About the desirability of instantaneously industrializing the African (although, left alone, he is "the happiest of humans" and, moreover, obligingly decreasing in numbers) in order to make Africa materially productive and full of a resentful black population, General Smuts appears to have no doubts. The General is a good Occidental, all out for doing something—as is indeed the habit of generals.

The same masterful passion for organization can be detected even in Smuts the liberal philosopher and world statesman. A "mere declaration of policy" such as the Kellogg pact—this moral gesture which declares: I will enter into no entangling commitments with my fellow-world-citizens but I declare that I, at least, am righteous—is not sufficient. Wisely enough Smuts insists on an institution; for institutions, not declarations, change the course of history. "The function requires a structure." He denounces the French demand that "teeth" be put into the League—a new war association to fight war, "Satan

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enlisted to fight sin." But he insists that the condemnation of war for national ends as a legitimate expedient for sovereign states to use at discretion involves, in theory, a distinction between "public war" (not for such ends) and "private war." It involves, in practice, an undertaking among the nations of the world to confer to prevent these private wars.

Perhaps the most important chapter in the book is that on Democracy. Here, not unexpectedly, we find General Smuts insisting upon the importance of the expert, while admitting the danger of the bureaucrat. He sees the work of the financial advisers of the Dawes and Young commissions as constituting a significant departure and precedent in removing the thorniest questions of politics from the sensational arena of inflamed and ignorant public opinion. The statesman is cowed by this public pressure. If democracy is to cope with these infinitely complex new problems of politics and to survive, "science should have its functional relation to the state." "The scientific expert should come in as a new additional organ of the modern democratic state." "Political democracy is in essence unassailable . . . but democracy is not enough." Would that these words of a statesman mellowed by experience and ripe with the fruits of a trained mind could be blazoned over every polling-booth in the civilized world. One of the most far-reaching revolutions of our age is that responsible statesmen are pointing out that politics is a department of science, not a branch of rhetoric.

GEORGE E. G. CATLIN

Fiction in Brief

The Kramer Girls. By Ruth Suckow. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

In Miss Suckow's latest novel, along with her usual excellence in pure representation, there is, perhaps, a stronger emotional current than in any of her previous books. She has yielded a little of her aloofness, and she has gained in power and depth. The story is of three sisters in the familiar Iowa environment. Miss Suckow's characters are never to be summed up in a sentence. It is only at first glance that they seem to be types. For she has developed to perfection her own technique of word portraiture—that of approaching a character from many angles, disregarding inconsistencies, until the figure emerges, three dimensional, astonishingly like life. If Miss Suckow has not achieved as yet in sustained power all that her admirers have hoped from her, the fact remains that she is one of the few of our important novelists whose powers are still on the increase.

The Excursion to Tilsit. By Hermann Sudermann. Translated from the German by Lewis Galantière. Horace Liveright. \$2.50.

The four long stories of Lithuanian peasant life included in this volume belong with the best of Sudermann's work. They are realistic, even to the point of being ethnological studies of a little-known people. At the same time they are much more. The characters are warmed and brought to life by a detached but loving understanding, and the events are selected and woven together into splendid dramatic fragments. The longest story, Jons and Erdma, is a little "Growth of the Soil," without the starkness of that great novel. It is touched with humor and humanity. The shortest, the title story, which tells the tale of Ansas and Indra, of how Ansas, led astray by another woman, takes Indra with him on an excursion intending to murder her on the way home but ends by saving her life at the expense of his own, belongs with the greatest of its kind. So fine a book should do much to revive interest in an author whose prestige, in America at any rate, has been for some time on the decline.

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The Hoax. By Italo Svevo. Translated from the Italian with an Introduction by Beryl de Zoete. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.

This novelette, published in Italy in 1928, the year of the author's death, is the first complete story by Italo Svevo (Ettore Schmitz) to appear in English. Svevo was an obscure Italian writer whose two novels, "A Life" and "Senility," had long been forgotten when James Joyce, who had known him since 1906, succeeded in convincing the literary world that a great novelist had been overlooked. His novels were revived and in 1923 he published "Zeno," his best-known work. "The Hoax" tells the story of a single incident in the life of a dreamy office worker who in his youth had published an unsuccessful novel, and who now satisfies his creative longings by writing, for his own pleasure, fables based on the antics of the sparrows whom he feeds outside his window. A practical joker convinces him that a foreign publisher is eager to purchase the rights to his forgotten novel for a large sum of money. Mario is completely taken in; but his gentle character stands the test of the humiliating ordeal through which he passes. It is a pleasant but not particularly important tale. One looks forward to the translation of one of Svevo's major works.

The Trough of the Wave. By Olaf Duun. Translated from the Norwegian by Arthur G. Chater. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

This is the first volume of a six-volume translation of Olaf Duun's Norwegian saga of a family of peasant freeholders, the whole to bear the title, "The People of Juvik." The volumes are to appear separately from time to time. The tale opens on an epic note with its recital of the traditional lore of the Juvikings of olden time, goes on to tell of Per Anders, the last of the "old men," and then takes up the story of his two sons, Jens and Per, who bring the family fortunes down with them into the trough of the wave. As befits a prelude to so long a work, the movement is slow, the acceleration gradual. Standing by itself "The Trough of the Wave" evokes a mood and portrays a background—and does little else. But further criticism had best be withheld until more volumes have appeared.

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IS "Journey's End" the masterpiece that it is claimed to be, or is its popularity merely a passing vogue? Whatever the answer it is clear that the story owes its present success not so much to the fidelity with which it reproduces the life at the front line (its picture of that life sinning rather on the side of idealization), as to the moral appeal of the unobtrusive and matter-of-fact gallantry that culminates its action. But having already asked: What price glory? it is quite possible that some day some of us may also ask: What price gallantry? We may become critical not only about the business of killing, but no less so about the business of being killed. For it is true that we admire gallantry in others because we recognize the ordeal that being in their place would be to us; because, too, as a rule we are directly or indirectly benefited by these feats of heroism, and therefore cannot possibly regard them as deserving anything but our greatest admiration. Hence, as long as society is conceded the right to call upon the individual to perform the supreme sacrifice, so long shall we have this far-from-disinterested cult of heroism, and so long will the "gentlemanly" Anglo-Saxons glory at the spectacle of gallantry that is unobtrusive and self-effacing. To brand the specific code of honor which permeates

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"Journey's End" as bourgeois (which it undoubtedly is) will no more solve the problem than to invoke the same code, with appropriate adjustments, in behalf of proletarian class rule or the Nietzschean superman. After all it does not really make much difference whether one is invited to destroy oneself for the greater glory of a nation, of a class, of the human race as a whole, or of the improved human species of a million years hence.

With these reservations concerning the fundamental values embodied in "Journey's End," one must admit that the actual spectacle of guiltless men walking docilely their "last mile" is in itself stirring enough to hold one in its grip from first scene to last. In this respect the film version of "Journey's End" (Gaiety) is even more tense than the original stage play, for it is less diluted by the orderly's amusing remarks on food, and unlike the play provides a few scenes of actual fighting. It also gains in comparison in the greater detail and relief which the cinematic treatment bestows on its characters. On the other hand, tensely as the story is told on the screen it lacks the more subtle play of contrasts which marks the progress of action on the stage; and it also fails to create that atmosphere of uncanny ordinariness and uneventfulness hiding the inferno of war horrors which the stage somehow succeeds in suggesting. Nevertheless, of its kind the film is a remarkable achievement, notable for the success with which it has preserved the dramatic qualities that went into the making of the original play. It would be an exaggeration to say that it is a cinematic masterpiece, for it never attempts to assert its independence of the stage and to express itself entirely in terms of the cinema; but it is skilful and intelligent as far as it goes, and this is no small merit for anything that comes out of Hollywood.

"Under a Texas Moon" (Winter Garden) is as different from "Journey's End" as a light extravaganza can be from the grim realities of life. Unlike the latter picture, too, it shows a divided mind in both its story and direction, with the disastrous result that inevitably follows such indecision. The trouble with the picture is that its producers could not make up their minds whether it was to be a piece of exaggerated romanticism or a satire on such romanticism. Had the satire been left out the picture would have gained immensely, and Mr. Frank Fay would have been able to make the character he plays with such penetration and charm a piece of truly unique and subtle portraiture.

ALEXANDER BAKSHY

Drama

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PHILIP BARRY is the author of two extremely successful light comedies and of a group of more pretentious plays which range in manner from the whimsicality of "White Wings" through the somewhat preachy emotionalism of "In a Garden" to the tragic earnestness of "John." The two comedies are as fine as anything of the kind ever written in America, but Mr. Barry seems much to prefer his less successful efforts, and his opinion is seconded by a considerable number of critics who never tire of repeating that "White Wings" and "In a Garden" failed because they were too good for the public.

Now I have never been one to subscribe to the opinion that theatrical audiences are more nearly infallible than any other section of "the general," but in the particular case of this playwright I have always believed that the public was right both when it acclaimed "Paris Bound" and when it turned thumbs down to the plays which were supposed to be above its head. I have never seen any reason why a social comedy replete with

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*Drama. †Comedy. ‡Musical.

urbane wit should be necessarily inferior to anything whatsoever, and the production of "Hotel Universe" (Martin Beck Theater) has only served to confirm my opinion that such plays as this are artistically much inferior to what their author apparently regards as his insignificant potboilers. In the new piece he tries once more to deliver an extremely hazy "message," and succeeds only in revealing to his audience what an ill exchange he makes when he trades the clear good sense of his wit for the pompous platitudes of a sentimental and second-rate mysticism.

The idea behind "Hotel Universe" is simple enough, once one has been permitted to glimpse its outlines behind the mist which envelops it. It seems that a collection of ever-so-rich and ever-so-sophisticated people has gathered at a house party given by a young girl devoting her life to the care of a semi-insane father who used to be a physicist but who appears to have lost his wits as the result of some very loose thinking about space-time—a subject which, by the way, may be all very well for mathematicians but which is disastrous for those who, innocent of mathematics, are prone to suppose that Professor Alexander is promising us all a kind of second chance (*vide* "Dear Brutus") in life. It seems, still further, that each member of the company suffers from one kind of *Weltschmerz* or another because each has got himself "fixed" by an emotional experience in the past. Fortunately, however, there is something in the atmosphere generated by the physicist which liberates everybody. Each goes into a kind of trance, relives the crucial scene of his existence, and then awakes so completely purified and liberated that the whole party leaves, ready to begin a new life in the great world, while the physicist, his task completed, lies dead in a very comfortable chair.

The idea is passable and, I believe, sufficiently good Freudianism; but what the play needs desperately is more matter and less art. Every incident loses its outlines because every incident is swathed in layer after layer of fuzzy verbiage about Life, Death, the Great Beyond, and the fact (announced by a mysterious white cock given to apparently untimely crowings) that "somewhere it is always dawn." The dramatis personae are supposed to represent the intellectual as well as the social elite, but they indulge in the most appalling mystical chit-chat and are responsible for a stream of discourse upon the surface of which float fragments of mangled Einstein together with all sorts of spongy, half-digested or completely indigestible bits which seem to be the remains of a meal formerly made upon some of the more repulsive varieties of New Thought. Such ideas pass current in Village salons when dusk and cocktails have combined to elevate the spirits and depress the judgment, but they are not taken seriously by captains of finance and other authentic bigwigs, unless the upper classes have degenerated farther than even the Michael Arlens maintain.

Cannot something be done to persuade Mr. Barry to respect and to cultivate the very considerable gifts which the gods have been good enough to give him? Cannot he be made to see that the "message" of wit, of urbanity, and of comic good sense may be just as valuable and just as profound as that delivered by any other kind of philosophy? If his "Holiday" is mere commercial entertainment and "Hotel Universe" is art, then I have made a discovery. I proclaim myself from henceforth a low-brow, unrepentant and unashamed.

I have all but forgotten to add that the production is extraordinarily polished—rather more expert indeed than the play deserves.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Owing to an unfortunate error on the part of the publicity manager for the World Tourists, Inc., an "ad" advertising Dr. Joshua Kunitz's tour has appeared in the issue of April 23, 1930, before it was seen or approved by any one responsible in the World Tourist Office or by Dr. Kunitz himself.

We regret the personal tone in which the "ad" was written, and we apologize to Dr. Kunitz for this slip.

We wish, however, to state that the second World Tourists, Inc. tour under the leadership of Dr. Joshua Kunitz still continues and from time to time announcements with reference thereto will appear.

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Ferment in Spain

WE reprint the following comment on the situation in Spain from the *Manchester Guardian*. It has become apparent since this article was written that the relaxation in the censorship was only temporary. For domestic news it is stronger than ever. Several newspapers have been altogether suppressed and many others fined. The early edition of the newspapers of Valencia was recently confiscated because it carried the speech of Señor Niceto Alcalá Zamora, prominent liberal, who declared himself in favor of a conservative republic in a meeting that had to be held in a small theater seating 2,000 while more than 50,000 stood outside. The censorship of foreign dispatches, on the other hand, was at the same time lifted once more, for the speech of Alcalá Zamora was reported in the American press.

General Primo de Rivera, Dictator of Spain, was removed from office in much the same ignominious way in which an unwanted petty official is retired. The King decided that he must go, and go he did, without fuss, trouble, or dispute. Dictatorships are not accustomed to disappear so quietly, nor does Spain seem destined to furnish an exception to that rule. On February 28 the Cabinet held a meeting and decided that it would be inopportune to hold elections at present; that the censorship should be continued and possibly be made more stringent. Spain, then, despite General Berenguer's fair promises, is as far from democracy as ever. The instrument of dictatorship, General Primo de Rivera, has been changed; the royal dictatorship continues. At the time of the removal of General Primo de Rivera it was still permissible to hope that King Alfonso had learned from the universal unpopularity of his dictator that personal rule was folly and might end in disaster. One might still hope that he would realize that his best course was to place himself at the head of the movement back to normality. A true Bourbon, he has chosen the other way. Only the minimum concessions to popular feeling have been made, and they have plainly been made in a grudging spirit. To what do they amount? Political exiles have been allowed to return, and they have been allowed a carefully limited number of opportunities to speak. Local self-government has been restored on a basis that makes nonsense of the word; the new councils are composed partly of the richest taxpayers and partly of those candidates who headed the polls at the last elections before the dictatorship. The censorship has been relaxed but it still exists. Very significant here is the fact that while the correspondents of foreign newspapers were at first, under the new regime, entirely free of restriction, latterly a measure of censorship has been reimposed. This is the sum of liberty reintroduced by General Berenguer and King Alfonso. It amounts to little if any more than that promised by General Primo de Rivera in his program of a gradual return to normal government. Can Alfonso wonder that his people demand an account of his responsibility for the dictatorship? Has not his action during the past month made it abundantly clear that he is no reluctant victim of circumstances but a full-blooded believer in personal, irresponsible government?

King Alfonso, then, has set his hand to hinder the return of freedom. Is he likely to succeed? The most important force behind him is undoubtedly the church. The Spanish church is still on the whole a great pillar of reaction. The dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera long enjoyed the support of the

great Catholic newspapers, while the ineradicable hostility of the universities to the government was largely due to the favoritism of Catholic student societies in which that government indulged. However, even in this ecclesiastical stronghold of absolutist sentiment there are groups who would not imperil their church's future by identifying it with an unpopular and anti-social system of government. There has of recent years been a great growth of Catholic Social groups, who have tried to introduce into organized Christian life a spirit of reforming tenderness. Prominent among their leaders are men like Señor Ossorio Gallardo, the president of the Madrid Association of Lawyers and a well-known Conservative leader, who has been making speeches deeply critical of the dictatorship and of the King's share in it. Have these men any chance of influencing the great body of parish priests? It is a question of supreme importance, for on the attitude of the great mass of ill-educated, silent, non-political peasantry depends the stability of any form of government. It is not that they will take any active part in deciding the fate of their country, but rather that no government can survive without their passive tolerance. Their attitude is to a large extent determined by the opinion of the miserably underpaid parish priests, who looked in vain to the dictatorship for any alleviation of their position. Would they now be willing at least to tolerate a republic, or is the very idea of free government so associated in their minds with anti-clericalism that they would withhold their support? They have as yet given no sign. . . .

The forces making for a republic, or at the very least for a change of king, are more active and virile, even if less numerous, than those which tend to support the present form of government. The concentration of almost all political opinion in favor of a thorough scrutiny of the King's behavior is a remarkable sign. Naturally one would expect Señor Unamuno to be of this opinion, but one would hardly have supposed that he could become, as he has, the voice of all awakened Spain. The Socialists, of course, are republicans, but there is real significance in the conversion of Conservative leaders to a skepticism of royal government. Señor Sanchez Guerra has accused King Alfonso of having brought in the dictatorship, and declared that in consequence the King can no longer take refuge behind his constitutional irresponsibility, as he has violated the constitution. That is a sign that the most responsible and the most moderate section of Spanish opinion no longer believes that the monarchy can safeguard its interests. These men are the most timid in the face of change, because they have most to lose by revolution. They are men of loyalty and honor, who would never leave a sinking ship unless it had first been deserted by its captain. . . . But why is it . . . that General Berenguer is still able to rule without a Parliament? So far there have been a few demonstrations and rumors of several political strikes, but nothing that has given the police any trouble. Spain is quiet today because the army has not yet spoken. It spoke once and General Primo de Rivera was dismissed. Since then it has been silent. But the army is the greatest political force in Spain. It can make and unmake ministries and kings. That is a very unhealthy condition, and the first business of any democratic government would have to be to take the army out of politics. But does the army wish to become less political and more professional? Until it has answered that question it is idle to speculate on the chances of free government in Spain. Monarchy or republic, as long as soldiers are politicians, citizens are at a discount.



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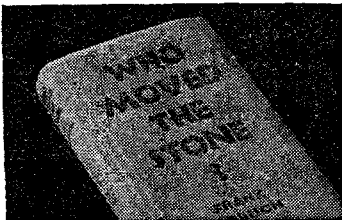
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